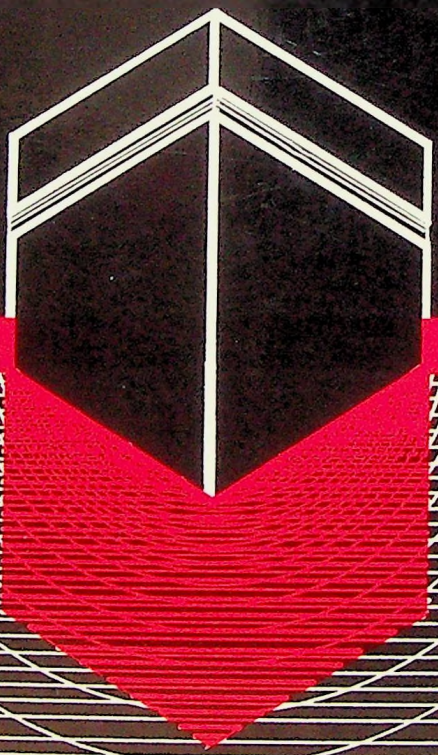
The Makkah MASSACRE and Future of The Haramain



Zafar Bangash

Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* has vouchsafed the sanctity of the Haram and the security of the *hujjaj* in the Qur'an. Yet on Friday, July 31, 1987 there occurred, in Makkah, a tragedy that has left the world of Islam in deep shock. More than 500 *hujjaj* were killed and nearly 4,800 were injured by the Saudi security forces. A number of troubling questions have been raised by the tragedy but the two that stand out most are: why did the massacre occur and how did so many people get killed in a matter of just one hour?

This book puts together the entire Makkah tragedy in its proper perspective. The author, Zafar Bangash, was present in Makkah on that fateful afternoon and was witness to the tragedy. He not only narrates what took place but he has also pieced together the story of how the Saudis pre-planned the massacre. The role played by the US and other external forces has also been analyzed.

Zafar Bangash is the editor of *Crescent International*, published from Toronto, Canada.

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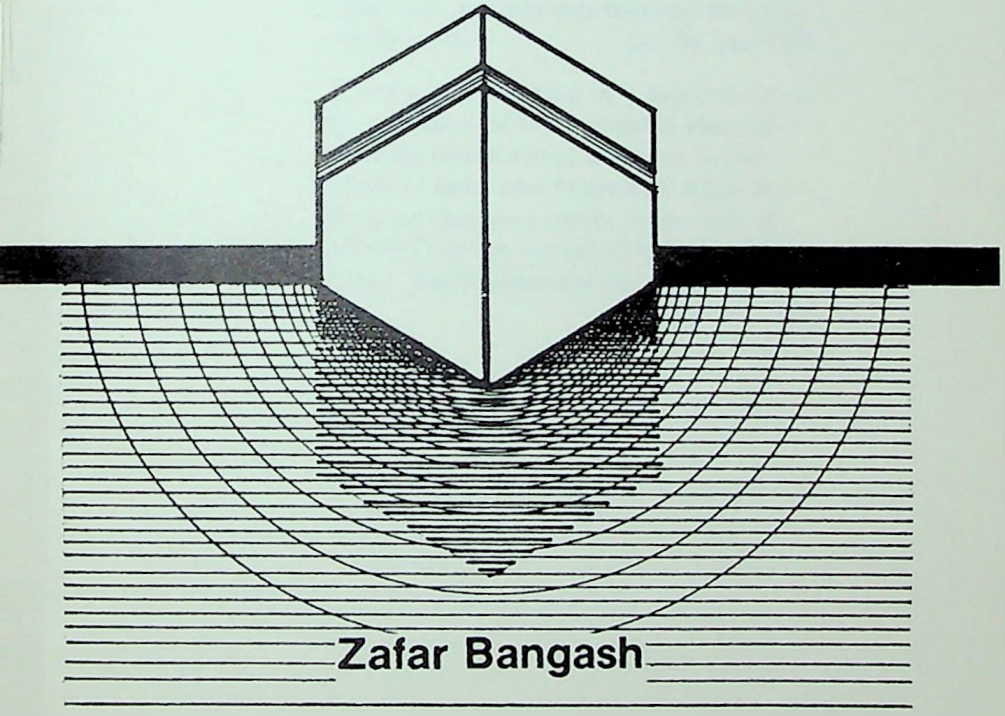

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And a proclamation from Allah and His messenger to all men on the day of the greater Pilgrimage (Hajj) that Allah is free from obligation to the idolaters, and (so is) His messenger. So, if you repent, it will be better for you; but if you are averse, then know that you cannot escape Allah. Give tidings (O Muhammad) of a painful doom to those who disbelieve.

(*Al-Qur'an*: 9:3)

He only shall tend Allah's sanctuaries who believes in Allah and the Last Day and observes proper worship and pays the *zakat* and fears none save Allah. For such (only) is it possible that they can be of the rightly guided. (*Al-Qur'an*: 9:18)

Count you the slaking of a pilgrim's thirst and tendance of the Inviolable Place of Worship (the Ka'aba) as (equal to the worth of him) who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah guides not the wrongdoing folk. (*Al-Qur'an*: 9:19)

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Zafar Bangash

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Contents

Foreword V

Prelude to massacre: Makkah under siege 1

From culprit to victim: the propaganda game 13

Why was the Haram's sanctity violated 35

The tribe from Dar'iyyah 39

The Qur'anic view of Hajj 57

Acts of desecration in the Haram 71

The future of the Haramain 77

Eyewitness accounts 87

Index 103

Foreword

Hajj is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam. Every Muslim yearns to perform the Hajj once in a life-time. Many use their life's savings in order to make the journey to the House of Allah. Each year at least two million Muslims gather in Makkah in the largest single gathering of mankind anywhere in the world to perform the Hajj.

Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in His Infinite Wisdom and Mercy has declared the Haram the sacred sanctuary. No profanities or lewdness are permitted within its precincts. Those who seek protection within its boundaries are safe. The *hujjaj* (pilgrims) who come to the House of Allah are assured complete safety and protection by the Creator Himself. Along with performing the *manasik* (rituals) of Hajj, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* has also ordained that Muslims must proclaim their dissociation from the *mushrikeen* during the Hajj.

Yet, it was precisely during such a proclamation in Makkah last year that hundreds of *hujjaj* were gunned down or beaten to death by the Saudi security forces. Several thousand others were injured. The sanctity of the Haram was violated and the security of the *hujjaj* was trampled upon, in complete violation of the Qur'anic injunctions. Why?

This question has continued to agitate the Muslims since the massacre in Makkah on July 31, 1987. The assault on the guests of Allah has also brought into focus the question of the control and administration of the Haramain. Should the Haramain — the two holy cities of Makkah and Medina, which are the common heritage of the *Ummah* — remain under the control of a single family? And does that family or a collectivity of families and regimes have the right to dictate how the Hajj is to be performed and by whom?

While no Muslim has publicly stated so far that religion must be separated from politics, there are many, especially among the ruling elites, who want to reduce Islam to mere rituals. The manner in which mosques throughout the Muslim world, with the exception of Iran, have been reduced to places of ritual worship only, reflects this trend. The emphasis on only the rituals of Hajj is another example of the same trend. This trend is for the *status quo* which insists that Muslims must accept their role in subservience to the forces of *kufr*.

But this is not universally shared by all Muslims. In fact a more dynamic view holds that the present *jahili* system must be replaced by the Islamic system as laid down in the Qur'an and exemplified by the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace. This trend also believes in the Hajj as a dynamic activity and an occasion to foster true Islamic brotherhood by proclaiming the dissociation of the believers from the *mushrikeen*.

This book not only provides a detailed account of last year's tragedy in Makkah but also examines the background to the emergence of the House of Saud. It was placed in control of the Haramain by the British in order to prevent the re-emergence of Islam in its dynamic, global role. Under the cover of 'guardians of the Haramain', the House of Saud has served, first British, and now American, imperial designs to the detriment of Islam and the Muslims.

The Makkah massacre has also led to much debate and renewed demands in the *Ummah* that the Haramain must be taken out of Saudi control. On the outcome of this debate will depend the future of the *Ummah*.

This book is an attempt to add to the understanding of the issues involved in this debate.

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Ramadan 12, 1408
April 29, 1988

Prelude to massacre: Makkah under siege

By midday, the Makkah sun gets scorching hot in summer. Temperatures soar to the mid-forties and nearly touch the 50 degree centigrade mark. On that fateful Friday afternoon on July 31, it was 46°C as the *hujjaj* (pilgrims) poured out of the Masjid al-Haram after Juma' prayers. By the time I made it through the crowded doors of the Haram into the equally-crowded streets, it was 1:30 p.m.

The Masjid al-Haram — or Haram as it is usually called — is situated in a valley. There are stark, barren hills on three sides: south, east and north. Only the western side is open and slopes gently away from the Haram into the crowded Makkan streets. The hills on the other three sides are today inexorably succumbing to concrete blocks that are being erected all around the Haram.

On the north-west side, a flight of stairs leads up from the Haram towards the steeply rising street. It peaks near Al-Raquba Street where the slope begins to fall the other way — northwards — from the Haram. On both sides of the street leading up to this plateau are small restaurants, crowded coffee shops and scores of small holes that serve as stores selling beads, prayer rugs, tape recorders, Pepsi, etc.

We walked up the steep incline to the top of the plateau and down Al-Raquba Street heading north towards the new intersection where Al-Gudaria and Al-Haram Streets converge to form a single road. At the bottom of the street, as we swung right into Al-Haram Street, we

were confronted by an unexpected sight. Part of the intersection was barricaded and military trucks, packed with soldiers, were lined up along Al-Raquba Street facing south. It was here that we were confronted by a baton-swinging soldier, the first of many such encounters as the day progressed into evening. Another army truck also pulled up, full of soldiers, and came to a screeching halt in front of us. Inside, soldiers with guns, batons, riot shields and helmets fidgetted uneasily. The soldier — perhaps a sergeant, for he was older than the Saudi soldiers one usually encounters — waved us on menacingly. He was definitely not from the police force. The police wear green uniforms in Saudi Arabia and are forever tugging at their pants to hold them on their large bellies. His uniform was khaki, indicating his military background.

The throng of pilgrims, taxis and scores of military trucks had already created a traffic jam at this point on Haram Street. Every pilgrim was anxious to get into a taxi or catch a bus to get to his/her hotel, apartment or house as quickly as possible to escape from the oppressive heat. The military trucks and police vehicles were blocking one of the three north-bound lanes on Al-Haram Street. We had to wait for at least 20 minutes — it seemed like hours in that heat — before we got on a bus. It was heading north, through Al-Mo'abdah Square and towards Al-Abtah Street where our apartment block was located. It was perhaps a stroke of good luck because the bus provided a good view of the street, both its north and south-bound lanes. And it was the 3-kilometre ride on that Friday afternoon that I had the first inklings of what was afoot in Makkah. There was far too much military activity and too many guns around in the streets, not to notice it.

It was generally known throughout Makkah that the Iranian *hujjaj* had called for a unity march - they called it *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* (dissociation from the *mushrikeen*, which is a Qur'anic term), to start from Al-Mo'abdah Square at 4:30 p.m. Flyers had already been distributed among the pilgrims of different countries inviting them to join this important march.

As our bus inched its way in the sweltering heat with horns blaring, I saw scores of military trucks, ordinary passenger buses and even vans packed with soldiers lined up on both sides of the street. At every few hundred yard intervals, tents were erected in car parks and other empty spaces in which more soldiers lounged. The police force was

also out in strength but surprisingly, it did not carry guns. There were several big black tear gas trucks parked at strategic locations. There was also exceptionally heavy military activity around the Makkah municipality building as we passed behind it heading north. A number of buildings had soldiers posted on top of them. And of course, helicopters hovered overhead. Helicopters are on duty in Makkah, Mina and Arafat all the time during Hajj but there was unusual helicopter activity that afternoon around Al-Mo'abdah Square.

The military and National Guards had arrived in Makkah on the evening of July 30, a day prior to the march. By Friday morning, the security forces had taken up positions behind the tall General Post Office building. Saudi intelligence agents had set up their tents behind Masjid al-Jinn. The Makkah municipality building served as a field command centre for Lieutenant General Mansour Khayyat, who was nominally in charge of operations and had come with the forces from Riyadh. The operation, of course, had been prepared by the West German anti-terrorism expert General Ulrich Wegener, who had arrived in Riyadh three months earlier. On March 28, 1988, the West German news agency DPA reported that General Wegener, together with seven other 'anti-terrorism experts', had formally entered the service of Saudi Arabia.[1]

Friday is a holiday in most Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia. All offices and banks naturally remain closed but during Hajj season, some essential services are kept open for extended hours. For instance, money exchange markets, called *sarraf*, remain open until late at night. Money is exchanged not in banks but in the tradition of the *souk*, through *sarrafs* in Saudi Arabia. Wads of notes are pulled out from underneath the table or drawer and exchanged for dollars, pounds, sterlings, etc. Similarly, most post, telephone and telegraph offices remain open 24 hours a day to keep up with the demands of pilgrims. That Friday afternoon, most of these offices were already closed, at least in the area from the Haram all the way north to the Aziziyyah district. A branch of the Riyadh Bank right across the street from our building remained closed throughout our 14-day stay in Makkah. The bank was on the ground floor of an 11-storey building and I soon discovered the reason: the apartments in the building were rented out to the Iranian *hujjaj* and the Saudis did not continue their normal banking activities.

Sacrilege in the Haram

By 4:30 p.m. thousands of *hujjaj* were gathered in Al-Mo'abdah Square opposite the *Be'tha* (office), an 11-storey building, of Imam Khomeini's Hajj representative, Hujjatul-Islam Mahdi Karrubi. It included thousands of women clad in the traditional black *chador*, made popular by the Iranians. But there were also hundreds of women in white *chadors*. Men were on the other side. There were also thousands of pilgrims from other countries - including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, the Philippines, Lebanon, Egypt, the Sudan, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and many other African countries. There were representatives of the Afghan *mujahideen*, the Hizbullah of Lebanon, as well as the Moro Liberation Front from Southern Philippines. Many more, mainly Iranians, but not all, were marching in groups under the banners of their respective caravans towards Al-Mo'abdah. Exactly at 4:30 p.m., the program started with the recitation of verses from the Qur'an. This was followed by the chanting of slogans, rhythmically orchestrated by Agha Murtazaifar, popularly known as the 'minister of slogans'. Murtazaifar is a master tactician of slogans and has earned his reputation through eight years of experience in the Islamic Revolution. He can work a crowd by changing slogans just at the appropriate moment. That afternoon, Agha Murtazaifar was in great form. The crowd was large, some 150,000 strong, spread over two kilometres, though not so massive by Tehran standards. And it was a good cross-section of the *hujjaj* assembled for Hajj. The slogans were simple but effective: the *kalimah, La ilaha Illal-lah, Muhammad-ur Rasoul Allah, Ya Ayyuhal Muslimoon, Ittahedu Ittahedu* (Oh Muslims of the world, Unite! Unite!), and the three 'political' slogans: Death to America, Death to Russia and Death to Israel — in that order. The slogans had been agreed upon in advance with the Saudis. Not only were the slogans carefully chosen but the Iranians, seasoned in organizing demonstrations in their own country, had spared no effort for this one either. Loud-speakers were installed at appropriate locations with power supplied by generators mounted on vans. Cables were run throughout the square as well as along Al-Haram Street up to the agreed upon dispersal point at the ministry of post and tele-communications building. This is located near the northern intersection of Abdullah ibn Zubayr and Al-Haram Streets, some one-and-a-half kilometres north of the Masjid al-Haram.

Hujjatul-Islam Mahdi Karrubi, though a soft-spoken man, delivered

his speech with emotion and fervour. He first oulined the Qur'anic injunction of dissociation from the *mushrikeen* and then explained that this was particularly emphasized for the time of Hajj. He also took issue with the assertion that there should be no politics in Hajj. Hujjatul-Islam Karrubi stressed that Islam recognized no such distinctions. He outlined the Islamic Republic's stand on global issues with specific reference to the presence of the US naval armada in the Persian Gulf. He castigated the warmongers — the US, the Soviet Union, the zionist entity of Israel *and* India for their crimes against Muslims. He said that the Soviet Union had no business to be in Afghanistan and pledged full support for the *jihad* there. He also denounced the US-zionist crimes against the innocent people of Lebanon and Palestine. Hujjatul-Islam Karrubi stressed that Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* had ordained *jihad* to be waged against those who perpetrate injustice and tyranny on earth. He also condemned India for the genocide of Muslims. The Arabic translation had an electrifying effect on the hundreds of thousands of others who were watching and listening to the speech from their apartments.

There were more slogans after the speech by Hujjatul-Islam Karrubi as the gathering was asked to organize itself to start the march. Hundreds of war-wounded in wheelchairs, many without limbs, led the procession which started by about 6 p.m. The women were arranged on the right and men on the left. There were four rows of volunteers joining hands in a human chain that stretched all the way along Al-Haram Street. Large ice-cooled tanks were also placed at suitable intervals to provide water to the marchers in that sweltering heat. The procession began to make its way along Al-Haram Street with rhythmic chants of the *kalimah*. 150,000 voices responding in unison drowned out the noise and horns of the traffic and military sirens. It must have sent a chill down the spines of those who could clearly read in it a challenge to their own tenuous authority. But quite oblivious of the authorities' concern or plot — the Iranians' innocent complacency, further strengthened by the casual look on the faces of the police who were unarmed — the marchers moved along cheerfully and in high spirits. Hundreds of thousands of *hujjaj* from other countries watched either from their apartment windows or stood outside on the pavement in the shade. Pilgrims from Turkey, Palestine and Jordan were clearly identifiable because huge flags were draped from their buildings.

At this point, Agha Murtazaifar announced on the loudspeaker that people should pay attention to an important announcement. He

declared that through divine intervention, a US helicopter had, earlier that day, crashed in the Persian Gulf. This was greeted by heart-rendering cries of *Allahu Akbar* from the crowd. At the same time three huge American flags went up in smoke, one after another, as people continued to rejoice with cries of *Allahu Akbar*.

The procession had barely moved along the street for ten minutes when armed Saudi security personnel, wielding clubs as well as guns, blocked Al-Haram Street in the vicinity of Masjid al-Jinn. A large contingent of the security, several deep, with military vehicles and tear and suffocating gas trucks behind them, had blocked the street in a line from Masjid al-Jinn on the west to the Makkah municipality car park on the east. Behind the security forces as well as on the second and third floors of the car park were hundreds of people dressed in 'civilian' clothes. Most of these were later discovered to be plain-clothes security personnel. An equally large number of plain-clothes security personnel had taken up positions on the Hujun Bridge that crosses Al-Haram Street at this point. (Hujun Street goes west from here, leading out of Makkah to the Jeddah and Medina highways.) People on the Hujun Street bridge had stocked rocks, bottles, logs and concrete blocks in large garbage cans.

As the procession was blocked by Saudi security forces from going forward, some of the organizers came in front to talk to them. While the Iranians insisted that the procession must proceed according to the original agreement, the Saudis quite bluntly told them that they could not go any further and must disperse. At the rear, other organizers, quite oblivious of the blockade in front, were urging the marchers, over the loudspeakers, to keep moving forward in an orderly fashion. Gentle Iranian persuasions with the Saudis failed to yield results or budge them. Voices began to grow louder and tempers started to rise. From the rear, the procession was still inching its way forward pushing the marchers closer to the security personnel until they stood eyeball-to-eyeball.

Then all of a sudden, from behind the Saudi forces, rocks and bottles started to rain in on the marchers. This was a most unexpected and unpleasant turn of events. As if on cue, people on the third and fourth levels of the car park as well as on the Hujun Bridge also started to drop their deadly wares — stones, bottles, concrete blocks — on the marchers below. The attack began to take its toll. Rocks, bottles and concrete blocks started to crash on people's heads, shoulders or backs,

throwing them to the ground. Some people were hit on the head causing deep cuts with blood oozing out soaking their clothes. Among the first people hit by the attack were women, old men and the crippled in wheelchairs. These were the people that formed the front of the procession. The attack from the 'civilians' was sudden and quite intense and it forced many of the marchers scurrying back up the street. But there was nowhere to go. Hundreds of thousands were moving towards them. On the right side was a big wall, on the left the Makkah municipality car park. The marchers were completely trapped.

Far from the Saudi security forces stopping this unprovoked attack, they joined in beating up the marchers. They waded into the crowd swinging their clubs violently. They did not care who got hit. They attacked viciously, as if letting out a rage bottled-up inside them for years. Most of their clubs fell on the crippled in wheelchairs sending them crashing to the ground. Many of these people, without limbs, fell out of their chairs and got trampled under foot by those trying to escape from the attack.

When the Saudi security forces moved towards the war-crippled in wheelchairs, some young Iranians tried to block their attack. One pilgrim, in particular, in a clean white dress, stood in front of a club-swinging soldier. Perhaps he was trying to protect his crippled brother, a cousin or maybe just a friend. As he stretched his arms out, the soldier's club swung wildly and came smashing on his head. He fell over the wheelchair and both he and the handicapped person went crashing on to the pavement. Other soldiers also rushed forward and started to beat both of them up as they writhed in pain on the ground.

In another area of the attack, a woman tried to shield an elderly lady — (her mother perhaps?) — but both were knocked to the ground. Did they get trampled in the melee or manage to get up? How many women were knocked over like this and trampled to death nobody knows for sure. Similarly, women and old men, who were either hit by concrete blocks or fell down in the scuffles, got trampled in the stampede. Amid the screams and wailings of women, clubs continued to land on their heads. In their zeal, the Saudis attacked even some Turkish pilgrims who were standing outside their building. Some of them ran into their building and brought out knives that they began to attack the Saudis with.

It was at this juncture that some young Iranians started to grapple both with the Saudi 'civilians' as well as the security forces. But they

were no match for the well-armed Saudis. The Iranians were not only completely unarmed but they were also not expecting an attack of this magnitude. There had been scuffles with Saudi security forces during previous years' demonstrations but they were of a minor nature. Always displaying a great deal of fortitude and patience, the Iranians considered those encounters as part of the price they had to pay for awakening the *Ummah*. But these were not scuffles. Here was a full-scale, well-coordinated and pre-planned attack. They were left with no choice but to defend themselves as best they could. But bare hands could not stop the rocks, bottles, concrete blocks or clubs. Even so, the Iranians did manage to grapple with some Saudis and knocked them to the ground. What particularly upset the Iranians was the manner in which the women and crippled people were being attacked and beaten up. The Iranians also turned their banner sticks into clubs to defend themselves. These were particularly effective against blocking attacks from the Saudi forces. Sensing that the Iranians were beginning to improvise and match their weapons (clubs), some Saudis turned on their heels and fled. But this was only a temporary respite. In fact, it was a signal for the National Guards and the military to spring into action.

Immediately hundreds of National Guards armed with M-16 rifles and submachine guns poured out of their trucks, vans and armoured personnel carriers parked behind the Post Office building and into the street. At the same time tear gas and suffocating gas trucks, parked south of the blockade, started to fire shells into the massive crowd. A number of shells landed in the middle of the section where the women were huddled. The effect was devastating. People began to writhe, unable to see or breathe. The crowd was so massive and packed so tight as they tried to push back up Al-Haram Street that people could not even fall to the ground. Boiling water jets were also used to attack the pilgrims on that hot afternoon. Amid the tear gas and suffocating gas attacks, the National Guards opened fire directly into the crowd. Gun shots crackled in the late Makkan afternoon. While the National Guards were shooting into the crowd, security forces stationed in the car park — the same place from where rocks and bottles had been thrown earlier — also started shooting. The shooting began soon after two helicopters appeared overhead. While one helicopter had police markings, the other clearly belonged to the military. Whether the appearance of the helicopters had anything to do with the order to shoot is not clear. What is certain is that just at that moment the

Saudis started to fire into the crowd. A variety of weapons and bullets were used, including rubber bullets but also M-16 rifles and even submachine guns and machine guns. The sound of gunfire was horrendous. Equally horrifying was the noise and screams as people were hit.

Al-Haram Street in the vicinity of the Hujun Bridge, Masjid al-Jinn and the Makkah municipality car park was turned into a slaughter house on that fateful afternoon. Incidentally, it is also close to the Abu Talib Cemetery where the Prophet's, upon whom be peace, grandfather Abdul Muttalib, his uncle Abu Talib and his first wife Khadija, may Allah be pleased with her, are buried. The shooting continued for over an hour and when it was over, there were more than 500 bodies lying in the street. Another 4,713 people were wounded, their injuries ranging from deep cuts on the head, face or shoulders, broken ribs or arms to minor cuts on arms and legs. The dead had bullets in their chests, abdomens, thighs or necks or had their heads smashed with clubs or rocks knocking their brains out. There were some trampled to death while others had died of suffocating gases.

Among the more than 500 dead were 208 women, at least six Palestinian pilgrims, one Pakistani and some of other origins. The injured included the *hujjaj* of all countries — Turkish, Lebanese, Afghans, East Africans, Canadians, Pakistanis, Indians, etc. It is not clear at what precise moment the order to the Iranians went out to stop resisting but as soon as the machine guns started blazing, people already dazed, sat down and put their hands on their heads. The gunfire continued for a while, but around *Maghrib* time, which was then at 7:10 p.m. in Makkah, the shooting stopped. The Saudi forces, however, continued to attack the *hujjaj*, especially the Iranians, with clubs. Those who were standing came in for special treatment. A contingent of Saudi soldiers would rush a few Iranians, surround them and start to beat them up. Such attacks continued for at least another hour. The Iranians in this area were not allowed even to stand up for prayers.

But giving up the resistance did not end the attack on the Iranian *hujjaj*. Those who had managed to escape from the scene were now being hunted and beaten up. The Saudi security forces started to go from door to door, knocking and demanding that all Iranians come out. In one house, a pilgrim from South Africa who had taken refuge there, witnessed the manner in which an Iranian man and woman were

seized and beaten up by the Saudis as they were led out of the house[2]. In another building where the Iranians had sought refuge in the stairways the Saudis fired suffocating gas into it, closing the front door behind them. Scores of people collapsed in the stairway. For the Saudis it was enough to see an Iranian to attack him/her regardless of whether he/she had done anything wrong.

In fact, the Saudis appeared so angry that they even attacked Iranian ambulances that came to pick up the wounded and dead. Not one Iranian ambulance was left undamaged. Their windshield and window glasses were smashed by batons or rifle butts, doctors and nurses were pulled out of them and attacked, and in one case, a Saudi soldier shot an ambulance driver through the head, killing him instantly. The Saudis even dragged out dead bodies and the wounded from ambulances. In one particularly grisly case, as two Iranian women, both badly wounded but still alive, were about to be driven away in an ambulance, the Saudis sprayed gasoline on it and set it on fire. The women were burnt alive inside the van.

All around, the wailing of women, crying for a mother, sister, brother, son or husband shot dead, could be heard. These voices were drowned periodically by the sirens of ambulances as they moved back and forth. The drone of military vehicles added to the din.

Operation clean-up and cover-up

The killing ground near Masjid al-Jinn was a mess. The ground was littered with rocks, shoes, *chadors*, water flasks, torn down banners, including some with the *kalimah* on them, and sticks, as well as hundreds of bodies lying in the street. Most were sprawled on the burning pavement in odd positions as they had fallen or been trampled, many of them women covered in black or white *chadors*. There was a heavy smell in the air — a mixture of pungent gas, gunpowder and burning gasoline.

Soon after the shooting stopped, the ambulances arrived to evacuate the dead and wounded. The Saudis were also pushing non-Iranian *hujjaj* off the streets ordering them to go to their hotels/apartments. The clearing-up order had a purpose. The Saudis were anxious to clean up the mess. There was also a lot of blood on the street. After all, more than 500 people had been killed and 4,713 were wounded. There were pools of blood here and there. In some places the blood had trickled and caked in the pavement. There was also blood splashed on

the walls of Masjid al-Jinn.

Squads of cleaning crews in their bright orange uniforms and *dallah* signs on their backs appeared on the streets. While they set about picking up the slippers, banners, stones and sticks, the Iranians were still picking up their dead and wounded. Flushing trucks were also brought to the scene of the carnage and soon the road, the sidewalk and the walls were washed clean. The Saudis started to wash the evidence of this carnage down the drain. Or did they?

The last of the dead or wounded were removed from the scene by about midnight. It was incredible how life then suddenly returned to its 'normal' hustle and bustle which characterizes Makkah during the time of Hajj. The only unusual sight was the presence of armed Saudi soldiers posted outside government buildings — banks, offices, etc. Also, all telephone offices in the vicinity of the march route — the area of Makkah north of the Haram — were closed. (I had tried to get to a telephone office to phone my family in Toronto that my mother and I were alright. Offices in our area were closed but we later learned that offices south of the Haram were open.)

Another unpleasant outcome of the carnage was that, contrary to all Islamic injunctions, the Saudis posted armed guards on all entrances to the Haram as well. The sight of armed Saudi guards, with fingers on the trigger casting menacing looks at every pilgrim entering the Haram, was most disturbing. Searches also became more intense. At each entrance, guards, two, three or even six, would pounce on a pilgrim searching bags, pockets and frisking everyone. So nervous were the Saudis that every item of necessity — umbrellas, water flasks, glasses, scissors and even wallets — were considered 'dangerous'. The *hujjaj* were ordered to leave one or more of these items outside the entrance, depending upon the whim of each Saudi guard. The hundreds of thousands of people entering and leaving the Haram daily, coupled with the Saudis' disorganization, not only caused delays but meant that any item left outside was never recovered. The loss of umbrellas and water flasks was particularly distressing in the scorching heat.

Notes

1: *Crescent International*, Toronto, Vol. 17, No. 3, April 16-30, 1988. 'The West German news agency DPA, reported that 'General Ulrich Wegener of the German Frontier Protection Force and seven other West German anti-terrorism experts formally entered the service of Saudi Arabia' on March 28. Wegener is reported to have masterminded the massacre in Makkah last July. The report added that Wegener, known to Germans as the 'hero of Mogadishu' and his team signed three-year contracts to train 'the 2000-strong Saudi Special Security Force'. Based in Riyadh they will be responsible directly to Saudi interior minister Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz'.

2: See Appendix, p.99.

From culprit to victim: the propaganda game

No sooner had the slaughter ended, than the Saudis launched their propaganda campaign. But even before the blood of the martyrs had been washed away from the streets, a number of Arab rulers had rushed in their congratulations and messages of support for the House of Saud. Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, King Hasan of Morocco, King Husain of Jordan and Saddam Husain of Iraq all condemned Iran without even waiting to hear the complete story.[1] Another entity that congratulated the Saudis for killing so many Iranians in the precincts of the Haram was the zionist State of Israel. In fact, *Arab News*, a Saudi bulletin, proudly proclaimed that King Fahd had received a message from Israel in which the zionist entity had condemned the Iranian demonstration. It was not really surprising that the rulers of Arab regimes and the zionist State held identical views. After all, these rulers and their kingdoms, shaikhdoms and fiefdoms were created by the imperialists to keep the world of Islam divided and to facilitate the establishment of the zionist entity in Palestine.

Among the Muslim masses, however, there was a spontaneous reaction against the sacrilege perpetrated by the Saudis within the boundary of the Haram. There were demonstrations in Pakistan, Lebanon, Occupied Palestine, Malaysia, London, Stockholm, Ottawa and several other parts of the world. But for the most part, the Muslim *Ummah* was stunned at the brazen disregard shown by the House of Saud for the sanctity of the Haram and the security of the *hujjaj*. These are ordained by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in the Qur'an and must not be violated by anyone.[2] Yet, the House of Saud has the dubious distinction of violating the sanctity of the Haram not once but four times.

The Saudis knew that they had a major task on their hands. They had

to explain how more than 500 people died in a matter of one hour. But they had several factors going for them. The apartheid-style isolation of the *hujjaj* into their nationalistic groups helped keep many, who were not present at the scene, virtually unaware of the carnage that had occurred. The general apathy of the *hujjaj*; the controlled manner in which the information was released to the outside world; the eagerness of the media in the west as well as the Muslim world to project the Saudi version and the timing of the carnage itself — two days before the *hujjaj* left for Mina and Arafat — helped the Saudi propaganda campaign tremendously.

There was, however, something unusual about this campaign. The usually secretive Saudis had suddenly become open and eager to talk. And there was a sophistication in their method that stood in sharp contrast with their characteristic clumsiness. The millions of *hujjaj* who go for Hajj every year can testify to the extraordinary delays they encounter at Jeddah airport. At times, it takes almost ten hours to get through immigration and customs controls at Jeddah airport. In the sixty years that the Saudis have been in control of the Hijaz far from improving the system, they have institutionalized incompetence, clumsiness and arrogance. This is also true of their propaganda campaign.

So where did all the sophistication suddenly come from? The hand of America, the patron-saint of the House of Saud, was clearly visible. The manner in which the western, and especially the American media, assisted the Saudi propaganda campaign, indicated a degree of pre-planning and prior understanding. The Saudis also called upon the preachers on their payroll to project their version. In North America, there was a curious situation: some preachers refused to talk about it, hiding behind the 'no politics in the mosque' excuse. Others openly projected Saudi propaganda. This was joined by some 'Islamic' organizations as well.[3] However, there were a number of *imams* of various Islamic Centres who were so appalled by the massacre that they stood up and condemned the Saudi crime.[4] Scores of meetings on university campuses and in mosques heard eyewitness accounts, saw the actual video of Saudi attacks and shootings and came away convinced that the House of Saud had committed a serious crime against the guests of Allah and violated the sanctity of the Haram.

For instance, the Saudis accused the Iranians of 'rioting'. Another version claimed that a fight had broken out between irate pilgrims of

other countries and the Iranians for blocking traffic and roads. The most preposterous allegation was that the Iranians were going to 'take-over' the Masjid al-Haram. The Saudi paper *Okaz*, whose copies in various languages were being distributed freely in Mina, made the most fantastic allegation. Its issue of August 6 alleged: 'The Irani pilgrims wanted to burn the Ka'aba, declare Qum as the Ka'aba and force the *hujjaj* not to visit Makkah but Qum instead for Hajj'! This theme was also taken up by the Saudi-paid *imams* and their sympathizers around the world. Some of these people then allowed their imagination to run wild. A number of them claimed that the Iranians were going to force the other *hujjaj* inside the Haram to pledge *ba'ya* to Imam Khomeini. Yet others alleged that the Iranians intended to take the Ka'aba, and particularly the *Hajr-e Aswad* (the Black Stone) away from Makkah. This was a most mischievous attempt to conjure up images of the Qaramitas' (Qarmatians') misdeeds in the third century hijri (9th century CE).[5]

The numerous Saudi versions and how they changed need a closer examination. But first we need to consider whether the Iranian-organized *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* (dissociation from the infidels) march was 'illegal'.

Pre-march meetings

Several days prior to the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* march, meetings between the Iranians and the Saudis had taken place at the highest level. The Saudi minister of Hajj and Awqaf, Abdul Wahhab Abdul Was'a and his deputy, Hisham Khashoggi, had held a two-and-a-half hour meeting with Hujjatul-Islam Mahdi Karrubi, Syed Jehangiri and Dr Muhammad Ali Hadi, a member of Iran's Majlis. Both sides had stated their respective positions. The Saudis, as usual, had expressed their reservations about the march and how it affected their security and traffic arrangements. The Iranians insisted on it and considered it an important step in re-awakening the *Ummah*, a position which the Saudis naturally opposed. The Iranians also pointed out that the purpose of the march was to proclaim the Muslims' dissociation from the *mushrikeen* — a Qur'anic duty ordained by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in the Qur'an (9:3). And Hajj, argued the Iranians, was the most appropriate time to do so. In the pre-march parleys, it was also agreed that slogans during the march would be restricted to the *kalima*, the call for Muslim unity and death to America, Russia and Israel. There would be no slogans against the House of Saud or even against

Saddam Husain. The Iranians made these concessions in order to allay the fears of the Saudis and to demonstrate their goodwill.

Subsequent to this meeting and with the understanding that everything was agreed upon, Hisham Khashoggi and Syed Jehangiri walked the approximately three-kilometre route that the march was to take. From the Iranians' point of view, it was a successful encounter. When the unity marches had first started in Medina in 1981, there were several incidents in which the Saudi security forces had attacked the Iranian *hujjaj*. In 1983, marches started in Makkah as well, again resulting in some skirmishes. The Iranians were anxious to avoid these because altercations during the marches distracted from their main aim — of uniting the Muslims and creating awareness about the problems confronting the *Ummah* imposed upon it by the forces of *kufr*.

But on the eve of this particular march, Hisham Khashoggi requested an urgent meeting with the Iranian officials, asking them to cancel the whole thing. This, of course, was nothing new. The Saudis had made similar demands in the past and the Iranians had rejected them. Following the earlier meeting, the Iranians had prepared and distributed pamphlets throughout Makkah, both among their own pilgrims as well as the *hujjaj* of other countries inviting them to participate in the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* march. Instructions had also been issued through the Iranian *khabarnameh* (newsletter) that was distributed among their own *hujjaj* regularly. Unsuccessful in this bid, Khashoggi then put forward three other conditions which were also promptly rejected by the Iranians as unrealistic. He demanded that the Iranian participation be restricted to a certain number, that no *hujjaj* from other countries be invited and finally that no one from Saudi Arabia should participate in the march. Despite the odd timing of these demands, the Iranians did not read into them anything unusual or serious. After all, similar last-minute problems had occurred in the past and ultimately everything had been resolved barring a few minor incidents. In addition, the Iranians were confident in the knowledge that a similar march in Medina, a few days earlier, had passed off without an incident. It was attended by no less than 100,000 *hujjaj*, at least 50 percent of whom were non-Iranians. For the Saudis, these were troubling developments. But in their innocence, the Iranians did not read the Saudis' mood correctly nor realize the plans they had devised to disrupt the Makkah march.

Pre-planning

Saudi propaganda in the aftermath of the massacre clearly indicated a degree of pre-planning. In fact, a number of pilgrims, including those from Canada[6], have testified that they were warned on the eve of the march not to participate because there would be 'trouble'. Other *hujjaj* have recounted that they were surprised to hear, on the afternoon of the march, from a waiter in a restaurant that 'the Iranians were going to "riot".'[7] The waiter was urging patrons to finish their meals quickly because the restaurant was about to close. How did the waiter — and presumably others — know of the Iranians' intentions, if such indeed were their intentions, unless somebody had deliberately spread these rumours?

Accounts given by employees of the various departments in Makkah about instructions they received prior to the march also indicate Saudi pre-planning to disrupt it. Each year a committee is established to coordinate plans for the Hajj season. This committee operates under the Hajj Organization Cell which ultimately reports to the Governor of Makkah, Prince Majid, at his office in Aziziyya. The committee consists of heads of the departments of water works, electricity, civil defence (Fire Brigade), law and order, traffic (minister of the interior) and intelligence. While the committee's operations are routine, since it is established annually, during the last Hajj, there was intense activity and some unusual orders. First, a directive was issued, on July 22, from the governor's office to the electricity department to be prepared to cut off power to the building occupied by the head of Iran's Hajj mission. The department had to be notified to ensure that power was still available to the surrounding buildings and businesses. While this was not implemented, a special meeting of the committee was held in the governor's office on July 29 to review 'important matters'. Following this meeting, the heads of the various departments left their staff in no doubt that something unusual was afoot and told all employees that they should be prepared for an unexplained emergency. This order was further reinforced by the news that King Fahd, defence minister Sultan and interior minister Nayef (but not Prince Abdullah who heads the National Guards) were already in Makkah from July 29 onwards. (The king occasionally comes to Makkah to wash the Ka'aba and replace the covering. But this is done when the *hujjaj* leave for Mina and Arafat. The presence of a number of princes in Makkah so early meant that something unusual was being planned.) An

emergency command centre was also established in the governor's office in Aziziyya with direct links to the field office in the Makkah municipality building. Those who were aware of these moves understood that something serious was about to happen. What precisely it would be, they did not know. But when the massacre occurred on Friday, July 31, they had not imagined even in their wildest dreams that that is what the Saudis had in mind or that it would result in such high casualties.

The Saudis' conflicting accounts

Immediately after the massacre, the Saudi Press Agency put out the following story, the same evening, based on an interior ministry release: 'After today's *Asr* (afternoon) prayer, Friday, 6 Zul Hijja 1407, (July 31, 1987), some Iranian pilgrims gathered around the Holy Mosque in Mecca...' Quoting an official from the ministry, the press agency went on: '...that in a matter of minutes some Iranians gathered in a tumultuous demonstration, causing the delay of worshippers' return to their homes and businesses. Thus, the flow of traffic was hampered, and movement in the streets and on the roads came to a sudden stop...'. The interior ministry official conceded that 'matters culminated in violent clashes between the Iranians and various pilgrims and citizens, during which, some casualties were inflicted, on both men and women pilgrims and citizens, due to the rashness of this mob demonstration.

'During the demonstration, some Iranians burned a number of cars and injured several persons. Security forces immediately intervened and were able to contain the incident, disperse the demonstration and restore order'.[8]

A casual observer not at the scene of the carnage, could not have discerned from the first Saudi report that anything very serious had happened. Even though it conceded 'some casualties' there was no hint of deaths and certainly not hundreds of them. The Saudi press release also contained a number of misleading or factually incorrect statements. First, it was claimed that 'the Iranian pilgrims gathered around the Holy Mosque in Mecca' when in reality they were almost one-and-a-half kilometres away and the starting point of the march — at Al-Mo'abdah Square — was nearly three kilometres from the Masjid al-Haram. Second, the Saudi story suggested that the Iranian-organized march was a spontaneous affair and that the Saudis did not

know about it. There was no mention of the pre-march Iranian meetings with the Saudi minister or the undersecretary of the ministry of Hajj and Awqaf. Surely, the interior ministry could not have been oblivious of those meetings.

Another misrepresentation was the alleged clash between various pilgrims. Again, no proof was offered nor was the background of the various pilgrims, who were supposed to have clashed with the Iranians, mentioned in the press release. In fact, pilgrims from other countries, including Jordan, Palestine, Turkey and Indonesia had helped the Iranian *hujjaj* when they were under attack from the Saudi security forces. The Saudi mis-statements were not the result of ignorance or lack of precise information. At least seven video cameras installed by the Saudis, on various buildings, were recording the entire demonstration. Saudi agents with binoculars and cameras equipped with telescopic lenses were also observing the scene. Other Saudi agents in plain clothes were present in the demonstration. Then there were the helicopters hovering overhead. The first Saudi reports were clearly designed to cushion the impact of the carnage and release information slowly until such time that they were able to put together a story that would have a leg to stand on.

The statement issued by the Saudi interior ministry the following day, August 1, 1987, only grudgingly conceded the true magnitude of the horror perpetrated the previous afternoon in Makkah. But this was preceded by a long, rambling statement accusing the Iranians of obstructing 'the flow of traffic', blocking 'all exits and entrances' and preventing pilgrims from 'circulating the Ka'aba'. The Saudis admitted that 402 people had died. But before this admission of the total number of deaths, the statement quite categorically said 'that none of the security forces or the citizens *shot even one bullet* at any Iranian pilgrim' (emphasis added). So how did so many people die in a matter of one hour? According to the Saudis, they were all 'trampled under the feet of the demonstrators as they retreated in disarray...'[9] Why the demonstrators were forced to 'retreat in disarray' was not explained.

The Saudis then provided the following breakdown of deaths:

- 85 Saudi citizens and security personnel
- 42 pilgrims of other nationalities that *resisted the procession* (emphasis added)
- 275 Iranian demonstrators, mostly women

The Saudi statement claimed that based on hospital reports and the ministry of health sources, the total number of injuries was 649. Of these, according to the Saudis, 145 were Saudi officers and citizens, 201 pilgrims from other nationalities and 303 Iranian pilgrims. The same statement also quoted the minister of information, Ali Al-Shaer, as saying that King Fahd had presided over an emergency meeting held by the Council of Ministers on Saturday, August 1, 1987 in the Salaam Palace in Jeddah. Al-Shaer narrated that the Council had reviewed 'all the security reports and the video recordings of the *riots*...'[10] (emphasis added).

A review of the August 1 Saudi statement again reveals a number of inaccuracies and mis-statements. The references to 'blocking all exits and entrances' and preventing pilgrims from 'circulating the Ka'aba' were designed to mislead Muslim opinion around the world. Since the procession was several kilometres away from the Haram, the question of blocking its entrances or preventing the pilgrims from *tawwaf* did not arise at all. But the Saudis knew that they had to come up with an excuse that would appeal to the emotions of Muslims even if it were totally false. Similarly, they described the peaceful procession as a 'riot', trying to lay the blame on the Iranians.

A similar but more colourful report was given by the Saudi embassy in Washington, DC through its bulletin, *Saudi Arabia*. Besides repeating the Saudi press agency report, it implied that the Iranians had tried to storm 'the holy Grand Mosque' when the casualties occurred. The same publication produced a picture in which an American flag on fire was referred to as proof that the Iranians were setting 'fire to buildings'.[11] Perhaps they expected the world to believe this. Actually some pro-Saudi publications, especially in Pakistan and India, played up on the same theme, and even repeated the same incredible Saudi allegation.[12] If anybody had rioted, it was in fact the armed Saudi security personnel who ran amok killing hundreds and injuring thousands of others.

The claim that not one bullet was fired was so blatantly false that even the Saudis' masters — the Americans — had to contradict it.[13] Thousands of people not only heard but saw the Saudis shoot pilgrims from the car park, the municipality building and even from the street. Scores of bodies with no head injuries lay in pools of blood in the street. When Iran invited foreign journalists to see the bodies of the pilgrims with bullet wounds, the Saudis alleged that Iran must have

shot their own dead after the 'trampled' bodies were returned from Makkah. They also made the trite comment that some must have been bodies from the warfront. Iran was quick to respond 'Do our women also serve and get shot in the front-line?'

The casuality figures given by the Saudis were also inaccurate. They claimed that 85 of their own security personnel or citizens were killed, mostly through stabbings. Most hospital sources and others that this writer spoke to in Makkah questioned these figures. The highest figures conceded by informed observers were of about 100 Saudi casualties, but mostly injured. An Arabic-speaking eyewitness recounted to this writer how he had asked a Saudi officer on the scene about Saudi casualties. The official told him that there were only 'a few of our own men injured'.[14] There was no hint of hundreds of Saudi soldiers or citizens killed or wounded. The Saudi official also gloated over the fact that the Iranians had been finally taught a lesson.

The Saudis conceded that 42 pilgrims of other nationalities and 275 Iranians, mostly women, were killed. Again, neither the figures nor the reasons advanced by them hold up to the facts. Frst of all, the pilgrims of other countries - among them Palestinians, Afghans and Pakistanis - were all participants in the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* march. They were either beaten or shot to death by the Saudis and were not killed while 'resisting the procession', as claimed by the Saudis. In fact, a massive demonstration had occurred in Jerusalem immediately after Juma' prayers in Masjid al-Aqsa on August 14 in protest over the Saudi attack in Makkah. The worshippers at Al-Aqsa were further infuriated by the news that a number of Palestinian pilgrims were among those killed by the Saudis.[15]

The figure of 275 Iranian dead is also not accurate, even if the Saudis conceded that most of them were women. These 275 bodies were returned to Iran within the first ten days of the carnage.[16] By the third week, Iran had received 322 bodies from Saudi Arabia.[17] Another 59 bodies lay in a morgue in Jeddah and were not returned to Tehran until October 17.[18] Despite the fact that it violated the Islamic practice of burying the dead as soon as possible, the Saudis held on to them on the pretext of establishing proper identification. Most of these bodies were badly disfigured. Their faces could not be identified easily but the Saudis insisted that their families must go through the agony and the horrible experience of examining and identifying their loved ones before handing over the bodies to them.

Altogether, the Iranian dead add up to 381 and not 275 as maintained by the Saudis. If the other figures given out by them are assumed to be accurate, the total number of deaths could add up to 508, in one hour, or between eight or nine deaths occurring each minute. In addition, another 4,713 people were injured — which meant nearly 80 injured per minute — and one can imagine the magnitude of the horror. Such high casualty figures seldom occur even on the battlefield. The Saudi attack had all the characteristics of a military operation and was carried out with one aim — to cause the maximum number of deaths and injuries. No comparable figures can be found anywhere in the world where security forces have confronted unarmed demonstrators.

In admitting that most of the Iranian casualties were women, albeit trambled and not shot to death according to them, the Saudis have not been able to explain a major flaw in their propaganda campaign. How was it that the video distributed by them around the world did not show even a single Iranian woman, dead or alive? Surely, with seven cameras installed on various buildings, the Saudis must have recorded every face that was in the procession. How did they miss nearly 50 percent of the participants — the women? The doctored-video that they flashed around the world was happily projected by the western media, ever eager to project Iran as the villain.

But the western media did not stop there. Anything that the Saudis could give them, however wild, was accepted and immediately projected as facts. The aim was not to reflect the truth but to show the Iranians as 'wild people' who were at war with everybody — the Iraqis, the British, the French, the Americans and now the Saudis as well. And if they could stick this image onto them, the Americans would then have a sound reason to take them on militarily in the Persian Gulf, on 'behalf' of the rest of the Muslim world.

Certainly there was much in the Saudi version that could be questioned. For instance, if not a single bullet was fired, how were so many people killed? The Saudis claimed that people fled in 'disarray'. What caused them to flee in such a manner? And why didn't the Saudis allow the people to escape, instead of trapping and beating them to death or shooting at them? But the western media was not interested in exposing such contradictions in the Saudi story. It excused itself by simply putting out a disclaimer that since no western journalists were (or are) allowed in Makkah, they, therefore, could not give a first-hand account. This, however, did not prevent them from projecting the

Saudi version *verbatim*.

Some went much further. A particularly vicious piece was produced by one G H Jansen who claimed to be a 'Sunni' Muslim, an expert on the Middle East and eminently qualified to write about the massacre since he had been on the Hajj pilgrimage in 1973! Armed with such impressive credentials, Jansen gave vent to his anti-Shi'i and anti-Iran venom. He went so far as to claim that 'every single one of the foreign non-Iranian pilgrims *may/will* return to their homes as an anti-Khomeini propagandist'.[19] How Jansen could speak on behalf of all non-Iranian *hujjaj* with such confidence was not immediately clear. Certainly, this writer, a non-Iranian and an eyewitness to the tragedy in Makkah, totally rejects Jansen's pompous claims. Jansen went on to invite the Americans, on behalf of the Sunni world, to deal with the Iranian menace! If it was this sound advice that the Americans followed, then they have already received their just, divine retribution for war-mongering against Islamic Iran in the Persian Gulf. The stock market crash of October 19 broke the back of the Reagan administration. This crash came exactly seven-and-a-half hours after US warships had attacked and destroyed two Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf causing $350 million worth of damage. By the same evening, the stock market had lost $508 billion. Within three weeks, US investors had lost $1,250 billion.[20] US war-mongering in the Persian Gulf contributed in some degree to this panic. Since then, news from the Persian Gulf has moved to the back pages of western newspapers and magazines. The Reagan administration has also toned down its belligerent rhetoric. There were no more threats of teaching 'the Iranians a lesson'. Instead, the most hawkish member of the Reagan team, defence secretary, Casper Weinberger, resigned within three weeks of the crash. And the US's policy of aggression in the Gulf went into partial eclipse.[21]

But not all coverage in the western media was so biased. An especially good piece, by Mushahid Hussain, appeared in *The Washington Post* on August 20. Mushahid Hussain, a former editor of the Islamabad-based daily, *The Muslim*, was also in Makkah for Hajj. He personally witnessed the tragedy and the Saudi brutality. Another interesting story came, of all places, out of Jerusalem under zionist occupation. *The Jerusalem Post* and *Yediot Ahronot* interviewed a number of Palestinian pilgrims who had returned after performing the Hajj. All of them confirmed that the Saudis had fired at and killed the marchers[22]. *The Toronto Star* also tried to make amends by publishing

an eyewitness account challenging the Saudi version, on August 27, 1987.
But given the antipathy of the west towards Islam and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the overwhelming thrust of the western media was (and still is) against Iran. It would be naive to expect otherwise. But what about the media in the Muslim world?

Media in the Muslim World

In most Muslim countries, the media is controlled, directly or indirectly, by the regimes in power. Since all regimes in the Muslim world are a creation of colonialism, they are antagonistic to Islam, the Islamic movement and the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The House of Saud, also a creation of imperialism, with all its attendant corruption, is a natural ally of these regimes. So the official media in the Muslim world simply reflected the line given by the regimes.

There are, however, a number of newspapers and magazines calling themselves 'Islamic' or purporting to support Islamic causes that are published in many parts of the world. Such publications are generally financed by the institutions to which they belong. Many are mouthpieces for political parties operating under the 'Islamic' label. The Urdu daily *Jasaarat* of Karachi, for instance, belongs to the Jama'at-e Islami of Pakistan. Another, the weekly *Takbeer*, also published from Karachi is edited by the former editor of *Jasaarat*, Muhammad Salahuddin.

Most of these 'Islamic' publications aired the Saudi version of events. This, however, should not come as a surprise. For years, the Saudis have invested heavily in all kinds of 'Islamic' groups around the world, through their front organizations like the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami, Dar-ul Ifta and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth. The Saudis also give handouts to struggling publications. Their owners, editors and the amirs of various jama'ats are on the boards of one or the other Saudi-financed organizations. Over the years, such publications have also come to see the Saudi system as 'Islamic'. Thus, these 'Islamic' publications now support only the outward forms of Islamic law but not its substantive application. Therefore, they and their political patrons work in close tandem with such regimes as the House of Saud and the military regime of General Zia ul-Haque in Pakistan. They also believe that these regimes are 'Islamic' and are busy drum-beating on their behalf. So if they simply parrotted the Saudi version of the

carnage in Makkah, it was to be expected. After all it was the Saudi money that was talking. But what was unusual was the vehemence with which they denounced Islamic Iran. In fact, they went much further than even the Saudis in making all kinds of allegations against the Iranian *hujjaj*. Throughout, their anti-Shi'i tone was quite pronounced. *Tameer-e Hayat*, the bi-weekly publication of Darul-Uloom Nadwat-ulama, Lukhnow, India, repeated the Saudi allegation that Iran had planned to 'take-over the Haram'.[23] *Al-Rashaad*, the monthly publication of Jami'at-ur-Rashaad of 'Azamgarh called the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* march a 'riot'.[24] But the most vicious attack came from *Takbeer*, the Karachi weekly, edited by Muhammad Salahuddin. The report, by 'a special correspondent,' sanctimoniously claimed that its publication was delayed in order not to inflame Shi'i-Sunni tensions in Pakistan during the month of Muharram. It then went on to accuse the Iranians of starting 'to throw stones from the surrounding buildings which they had occupied'.[25] Even the Saudis, despite their gross distortions, had not come up with this one. The report, apart from reproducing the earlier Saudi propaganda, came up with a few additional accusations of its own. It printed a photograph showing some knives that were allegedly to have been used by the Iranians for taking over the Haram. First of all, printing a photograph of knives does not prove that the Iranians had brought them. But even if they did, it proves little. The reporter either believed that the Iranians were super humans or that the Saudi security personnel were totally incompetent. How else could one explain that a few people, armed only with kitchen knives, could over-power thousands of Saudi soldiers armed with clubs, guns, pistols, machine guns, tear gas and suffocating gas?

The *Takbeer* report also lamented the presence of Iranian *ulama*, high government officials and members of the Majlis (parliament) among the Irani *hujjaj*.[26] Naturally, in the 'Islamized' atmosphere of the Jama'at/*Takbeer* framework, Hajj is only for the poor, ignorant masses. High officials have no business in the House of Allah. One can imagine the kind of Islam *Takbeer* is advocating in Pakistan. The report also gave a breakdown of figures for the Iranian *hujjaj*. Again, quoting Saudi sources, it said that 25 percent were *Sepah* (Revolutionary Guards), 40 percent *Baseejis*, 13 percent from the Cultural Revolution and 22 percent were ordinary people. How did the Saudi officials come up with these figures? In any case, the figures given by the Saudis do not bear any relation to facts, but even if they were true,

why should it be surprising to anyone that Iran's Revolutionary Guards and *Baseejis* were among those who came to perform Hajj? Do they not have a right to fulfill one of the fundamental pillars of Islam? But the question is, if there were really so many Revolutionary Guards and *Baseejis*, how was it that the casualties among the Iranians were so high? Even the enemies of Islam (ask the Iraqi Ba'athists or the zionists) admit that the Revolutionary Guards are totally impervious to fear. In fact, the *Sepah* are the backbone of Islamic Iran's defence forces. If the massively-armed Ba'athists flee from their presence, what match are the amateur Saudi soldiers? It is obvious that there were very few *Sepah* in the demonstration or among the Iranian *hujjaj*. And there was certainly no pre-planning on the part of Iran to do anything to cause confusion or create chaos. It would go against the very purpose of the march. The plan to disrupt the march was made by the Saudis who carried it out with maximum force and ruthlessness.

The *Takbeer* report highlighted another accusation, which was also made by the Saudis. It related to the smuggling of 51 kilograms of explosives by some Iranian *hujjaj* during the previous year's Hajj (August 1986).[27] The manner in which the Saudis and their sympathizers tried to exploit this incident reveals their true nature. The Saudis accused the government of Iran of trying to smuggle these explosives into Saudi Arabia. Interestingly, the incident was hushed up by the Saudis in 1986. Why? If Iran was really behind the affair, why did the Saudis not expose it then and let the world know about this Iranian 'mischief'? What better propaganda weapon could the Saudis have?

The real story, of course, is very different. The Saudis know it but they had dare not tell the whole truth lest their propaganda campaign becomes totally exposed. They are already experiencing a credibility problem with the claim that 'not a single bullet was fired'. Even their friends and apologists don't believe them on this.[28] Can the rest of their propaganda be any different?

The real story of the explosives

In July 1986, on a tip from the Islamic Republic of Iran, approximately 95 suitcases containing 51 kilograms of explosives in false bottoms were intercepted from Iranian *hujjaj* at Jeddah airport. At the time, the Saudi regime thanked the Islamic Republic for its help and decided to hush the matter up. But Iran was interested in getting to the bottom of

this whole affair. On further investigation, the Islamic Republic found out that a group headed by one Mehdi Hashemi was behind the smuggling plot. A number of military officers were also involved with him. Mehdi Hashemi was then in charge of coordinating the activities of some Afghan *mujahideen* groups. He had previously been head of the office dealing with all the liberation organizations around the world, from which he had been removed by the time the explosives scandal story broke out. Hashemi was under surveillance by the authorities in Iran for quite some time. In October 1986 he and a number of his associates were arrested on charges of illegally possessing secret government documents, sedition, murder and a number of other crimes.

In January 1987, Hashemi made a televised confession about the charges against him. In August 1987 he was tried, together with a number of his co-conspirators in Evin prison. On September 27, 1987, Hashemi was executed by firing squad.[29] The story of Mehdi Hashemi's arrest, trial and execution was reported in detail in most Iranian newspapers. Even so, the Saudis and their supporters never mentioned this and tried to blame the Islamic Republic of Iran for that affair. Such gross distortion of facts could not be the result of ignorance. It was part of a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign by the Saudis in which the so-called 'Islamic' media was a willing tool to tarnish the image of the Islamic Republic.

The Saudis had, rather cleverly, prepared a video of the 1986 explosives smuggling. It was flashed around the world after the slaughter in Makkah in July 1987 to score a quick propaganda point. The *Takbeer* report (incidentally its 'special correspondent' did not even know that Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri was not the former foreign minister but the interior minister of Iran!) also alluded to a story in the Saudi daily *Okaz* (August 12, 1987) which claimed that a number of Iranian *hujjaj* had smuggled some explosives during the 1987 Hajj too. If that was the case, how and why did the Saudi regime let them smuggle these in? And, why hasn't the regime exposed those involved in it or used it to score propaganda points? If the Saudis could go to such lengths to distort and twist facts for their propaganda purposes, why didn't they use a supposedly genuine case in 1987 to highlight their point?

In the aftermath of the massacre, the Saudis put out a number of fantastic stories. One that was repeated by the interior minister, Prince

Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, on August 25 in a press conference in Jeddah, his first conference since the Haram uprising in 1979, was the one relating to 'not firing a single bullet'. What was the reason for repeating such a blatant lie? Perhaps Nayef thought that journalists around the world were as docile and submissive as those in Saudi Arabia. Besides, by repeating this lie, it could generate debate among Muslims on a secondary point and their attention would be diverted from the real issues: the sacrilege of the slaughter of hundreds of pilgrims and the violation of the sanctity of the Haram.

Among the pro-Saudi propagandist publications, one more deserves mention if only because it is full of vile invective. Titled *Haram-e Makkah ka Sanihah* (The tragedy in the Haram of Makkah), it is edited by one Dr Mas'ood ul-Zafar Rehmani, and published by an organization calling itself the 'Majlis Tahaffuz-e Islam', Delhi, India. Naturally, it has fallen to this group of court '*ulama*', opportunists and other assortment of Saudi-paid agents to stand up for the 'defence of Islam'. This group of brave warriors sees nothing wrong in Hindu-dominated India or the corruption of the House of Saud but they want to 'save' Islam when it comes to confronting the Islamic State of Iran. They are clearly for the *jahili status quo*. Among some of the names whose statements are included condemning Iran and supporting the Saudi regime are: Maulana Asad Madani (an agent of the Hindu Indian government); Syed Shahabuddin, MP and member of the Janata Party (a fascist party in India); Maulana Abul Laith Islahi, *amir* of Jama'at-e Islami, India; and Maulana Abul Hasan Nadvi, Nazim Nadvat ul-Ulama, Lukhnow.

The book is merely a collection of statements by a number of people, two interviews with the Saudi ambassador in New Delhi, Fawad S Mufti, reprints from a number of Indian papers including Hindu papers and magazines, and a distasteful collection of cartoons. The fact that those who call themselves '*ulama*' should stoop to such levels to reprint editorials from Hindu papers and writers and ugly cartoons of Imam Khomeini, clearly reflect their own mentality. The book, a crude propaganda attempt, would not merit comment but for the fact that it includes statements by some well-known '*alims*'. Foremost among them is Maulana Abul Hasan Nadvi. He is head of the Nadvat-ul Ulama, Lukhnow, India. Maulana Nadvi has been in the forefront of the anti-Shi'i campaign for some years. He has been campaigning, since the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, to brand Shi'is as *kafirs*. The fact that no *alim* of any stature anywhere in the world,

except those on the pay-roll of the Saudis or living in the polluted confines of Hindu-dominated India, have responded to his call, speaks for itself. But Nadvi's anti-Shi'i rantings are clearly motivated by other factors.

In October 1977, in an unpublished tract under the title *Kayfa Yanzur al-Muslimoon Il-al Hijaz wa Jazirat-al-Arab* Nadvi condemned the society in Saudi Arabia.[30] He had written that there was too much corruption, lewdness and other vices seeping into Saudi society through the introduction of television, movies and luxury goods. He also condemned the Saudis as 'vultures and wolves for ripping off the *hujjaj*'. Nadvi further stated that those British officers — military and civilian — who brought Ibn Saud to power, were handsomely rewarded by the British government. This, according to Nadvi, was proof that Ibn Saud was installed to serve British, rather than Muslim, interests. Yet, today he is a favorite figure on the Saudi conference circuit. What has happened since 1977 to bring about a change of heart in Maulana Nadvi? Surely, the Saudi society under Fahd has not become less but more corrupt since 1977. Is Maulana Nadvi oblivious of this fact or does he no longer consider lewdness, debauchery and fornication as vices? Maulana Nadvi was also a star performer at the five-day conference organized by the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami from October 11 to 15, 1987 in Makkah. The Rabita is a Makkah-based Saudi front organization established in 1963. Its affiliates include the World Council of Masajid and the Islamic Fiqh Council. The October 11 to 15 conference was supposed to discuss the 'Future Prospects for Da'wah and Development in the Muslim World' but in reality it turned into an anti-Iran extravaganza. More than 700 people were flown in from around the world, all expenses paid, to rubberstamp the Saudi hate campaign against Iran. Even so, many participants came away thoroughly disgusted by the crude Saudi propaganda and the manner in which the whole conference was turned into a charade. The resolutions had little to do with the actual topic and more to do with anti-Iran propaganda.[31]

But Maulana Nadvi is not the only one who has sided with the Saudis despite his past criticism of them. There are many others who have had a change of heart and thinking in the last few years. Or, perhaps, they never had a change of heart; their earlier pronouncements were simply uttered to flow with the tide at the time. Take again, the case of Brother Salahuddin, the editor of *Takbeer*. At the International Hajj Conference organized by the Muslim Institute in London, in August

1982, Salahuddin had presented a paper titled 'The political role of Hajj'.[32] In that paper he said: 'The aims and objectives of politics are the purposeful development of mutual relationships for the establishment of peace, enforcement of justice...curbing of crimes, unity of a nation...improvement of moral standards...and the promotion of equality and brotherhood.[33]

'Bearing the demands and objectives of politics in mind, we must study the chain of historical events in the life of the Prophet Ibrahim, which have been set forth in the pages of the Qur'an. These make it evident that the background of Hajj is political'.[34] Later on, he says that 'Royal command, paternal pressure...could not deter' Prophet Ibrahim from his 'divinely-ordained mission to establish the sovereignty of Allah on earth'.[35] Expanding on the theme, Salahuddin said: 'Wrong beliefs and evil concepts grow and flourish under human and ungodly sovereignty'.[36] He went on to say that the community established by Prophet Ibrahim 'recognized only the sovereignty of Allah'[37]; '*shirk* was completely obliterated' and that Makkah was made the 'centre of Allah's political authority'.[38]

Salahuddin lamented the fact that 'the *kalimah*, which broke idols and annihilated the forces of evil, is still uttered but has lost its meaningfulness'[39]. In a stirring conclusion, he said that Makkah had remained a focal point for Prophets from Ibrahim to Muhammad, upon them all be peace, as well as the righteous *khulafah*. It remains a focal point for revolutionary leaders among Muslims to the present day. 'Whether it be Imam Husain or Imam Hanbal, Mahdi Sudani, Shaikh Sannusi, Sayyid Ahmad, Badi-az-Zaman Nursi, Hasan al-Banna Shaheed, Sayyid Qutb Shaheed, Dr Ali Shari'ati, Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maududi, Imam Khomeini, a *mujahid* from Afghanistan or the fighter against zionism in Palestine, all are inspired by the same focal point'.[40]

Stirring stuff indeed! The conclusions one could draw from the above would be that the writer firmly believes in the sovereignty of Allah, in the political role of Hajj and is a supporter and admirer of Imam Khomeini. Another reasonable assumption would be that he would find the present rulers of Saudi Arabia, completely subservient to the power of *kufr*, unworthy of calling themselves 'the custodians of the Haramain'. Surely, even the most naive do not consider the House of Saud as anything more than a motley collection of greedy shaikhs serving, not the interests of Islam or Muslims but acting as slaves for

their master in the White House. Under the control of the House of Saud, *shirk* again reigns supreme in Makkah and Medina. One does not have to place stone idols in the Ka'aba to understand this. Their new idols are Saudi nationalism, petro-dollars and US imperialism.

Yet Salahuddin agreed with those at the Rabita Conference in Makkah last October clamouring to declare Imam Khomeini 'a *kafir*' (*astaghfirullah*).[41] He found such figures as Mahdi Bazargan and Masoud Rajavi, leader of the Mujahideen-e Khalq Organization, popularly called the *Munafiqeen*-e Khalq (MKO), a terrorist organization, as representatives of the Iranian people.[42]

Salahuddin maintained that he found some people as emotional in their support of Iran as those who opposed it. He asked rhetorically: 'Why is (Imam) Khomeini all alone today when the whole world had supported him during the movement against the Shah?' Perhaps Salahuddin is not aware — or does not wish to admit — that Imam Khomeini is not all alone today.He enjoys the respect and support of millions of ordinary people from Indonesia to Morocco. He is forever remembered in the prayers of such ordinary people, whom Salahuddin and his peers in Pakistan call 'too stupid to understand Islam'. It is true that Imam Khomeini is not popular with the tyrants that occupy the palaces, but who do these tyrants represent — the Muslims or their masters in Washington, Moscow, Paris or London? In Pakistan itself, ordinary people, when tormented by the bureaucracy, the feudal lords and the oppressive system, often cry out in anguish for an Imam Khomeini of their own to deal with these people. Salahuddin probably does not hear the anguished cries of such ordinary Pakistani people anymore because he now jet-sets with General Zia. He is frequently included in the 'pious' general's entourage whether it is on a pilgrimage to the White House or a visit to the anti-Islamic Kemalist generals of Turkey. How can he now support Imam Khomeini, especially when his magazine has been approved for distribution in Saudi Arabia?[43]

Not all journals in the Muslim world were so taken in by the Saudi propaganda. Many of them published interviews or accounts of the returning pilgrims, thereby putting the entire tragic episode in its proper perspective. Notable among these were: *Zaman* (Turkey), *Afkar Inquiry* (London, September 1987), *The Muslim Digest* (South Africa, July to October 1987) and *The Hong Kong Muslim Herald* (September 1987).[44] The former editor of *Zaman*, Fehmi Koru, even produced a book in Turkish, *Mekkede Ne Oldu* ('What happened in Makkah?')

which became a best-seller within days of coming off the press.

Notes

1: *Saudi Arabia*, Vol. 4, No. 9, September 1987 The monthly newsletter of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Washington, DC. The Saudi embassy also published a special edition in September 1987 repeating many of the allegations contained in their regular monthly newsletter.

2: *Al-Qur'an*, 2:125-126; 3:96; 5:95-96. Throughout this book, I have used the English translation of the Holy Qur'an by Marmaduke Pickthall. Taj Company, Lahore, Pakistan.

3: The letter, in poor English and with no date, was signed by 14 people representing various organizations in North America. The letter claimed that 'the Imams, scholars (*sic.*) and representatives of Islamic centres...met on August 9, 1987 in Washington, DC...'. Among the signatories are: Wallace D Muhammad, the leader of the Muslim American community (*sic*), Dawud Assad, Council of Masajid of USA, Inc. N.Y., Dawood Zwink, Vice Pres. for USA Islamic Soc. of North America (ISNA), Yaser Bushnag, Executive Director of Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA), Muzammil H Siddiqi, Islamic Society of Orange Country (*sic.*), Garden Grove, Ca. 92692 and Bashar Mansour, Vice President (USA) Muslim Students Ass. (*sic.*). The old and not-so-old guards of ISNA are all in the line-up together with other Saudi-sponsored organizations.

4: *The Minaret*, Los Angeles, Ca. US, Summer 1987.

5: Fazlur Rahman. *Islam*, Anchor Books, Doubleday & Co. Inc., Garden City, NY, 1988. p.214.

6: I have personally spoken to several of these pilgrims from Toronto, Canada. This information was conveyed to me by them.

7: Testimony of Haji Asadullah, Hyderabad, India. See Appendix pp.97.

8: *The Muslim Journal*. Chicago, US. August 21, 1987. The Saudi press release was printed in its entirety by this paper.

9: *Ibid.*

10: *Ibid.*

11: *Saudi Arabia*, Vol. 4, No. 9, September 1987.

12: *Takbeer*, Vol. 9, No. 37, Karachi, Pakistan, September 17, 1987. pp.10-16. Also see *Haram-e Makkah ka Saniha* (The Tragedy of Haram-e Makkah), compiled by Dr Masooduz Zafar Rehmani, Majlis Tahaffuz-e Islam, Delhi, India, September 1987.

13: *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, September 7, 1987 which reproduced a story from the New York Times Service by Elaine Sciolino. Also see *Detroit Free Press*, August 30, 1987; *San Jose Mercury News*, August 5, 1987, quoting Knight-Ridder News Service.

14: See Appendix, p.88.

15: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 12, Toronto, September 1-15, 1987.

16: The first Saudi reports constantly referred to only 275 Iranian dead. Thereafter, the Saudis did not issue a revised figure.

17: *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, printed a Reuter's story datelined Tehran on August 17, 1987. It quoted Dr Vahid Dastgerdi, head of Iran's Red Cross, that the Saudis had returned only 230 bodies to Iran so far. Another 90 or so bodies were being held back 'because they died of bullet wounds. 50 are still missing'!

18: Tehran Radio report, October 17, 1987; Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), October 17, 1987.

19: *The Toronto Star*, August 9, 1987.

20: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 17, Toronto, November 16-30, 1987.

21: *The Toronto Star*, January 11, 1988. During the visit of US secretary of defence Frank Carlucci to Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia in the second week of January, it was reported from Washington that the US was about to withdraw the minehunting helicopter carrier *Okinawa* and battleship *Iowa* from the Persian Gulf. The US policy of aggression has been revived again, since April 17, 1988 when US warships re-launched attacks against Iranian targets in the Persian Gulf as well as the Faw Peninsula.

22: *The Toronto Star*, August 11, 1987. Based on an AP-Reuter story from Jerusalem, the story quoted the two papers *Yediot Ahronot* and *Jerusalem Post*.

23: *Ta'meer-e Hayat*, Vol. 24, No. 20, Lucknow, India, August 25, 1987.

24: *Al-Rashaad*, September 1987, Jame'at-ur Rashaad, 'Azamgarh, UP., India. pp.2-5.

25: *Takbeer*, Karachi, Pakistan, September 17, 1987.

26. *Ibid.*, p.14.

27: *Saudi Arabia*, Vol. 4, No. 9, Washington, DC, September 1987.

28: *Takbeer*, Karachi, Pakistan, November 5, 1987. p.11.

29: *Tehran Times*, September 29, 1987. Mehdi Hashemi and several of his co-conspirators were put on trial which started in Evin prison on August 13, 1987 (*Tehran Times*, August 16, 1987).

30: Quoted in Abdel Latif bin Abdel Ghani Jasoos, *Azmat-e Amanah* (Crisis in Honesty), Beirut, 1985. pp.96-103.

31: *Takbeer*, Karachi, Pakistan, November 5, 1987.

32: Zafarul-Islam Khan & Yaqub Zaki (ed). *Hajj in Focus*, Toronto, London, 1986. pp.41-53

33: *Ibid.*, p.41.

34: *Ibid.*, p.41.

35: *Ibid.*, p.42.

36: *Ibid.*, p.44.

37: *Ibid.*, p.45.

38: *Ibid.*, p.46.

39: *Ibid.*, p.49.

40: *Ibid.*, p.51.

41: *Takbeer*, Karachi, Pakistan, November 5, 1987. p.10.

42: *Takbeer*, April 21, 1988. p.30.

43: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 19, Toronto, December 16-31, 1987.

44: A number of publications from the Islamic Republic, especially issues of *Kayhan* and *Tehran Times* throughout August 1987 carried detailed reports on the massacre. A pictorial edition of *Soroush* magazine (Shahrivar 13, 1366 or Fall 1987) is well-worth looking at to see the carnage.

Why was the Haram's sanctity violated

The question that has not been adequately dealt with, and perhaps may never be answered fully is, why did the Saudis perpetrate this massacre? Surely, it would have been possible to stop the march, if that was the real intent, without resorting to so much force and the resultant loss of hundreds of innocent lives. Certainly, nowhere else in the world, even under the apartheid-regime of South Africa, have such massive casualties occurred in a single incident. The sanctity of the Haram and security of life at the time of Hajj that have been vouchsafed by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* Himself in the Qur'an, must make every believer shudder at the thought of such desecration.

A number of explanations have been advanced for the Saudis' sacrilegious behaviour. It has been suggested that the Saudis viewed with growing apprehension the success of the Iranian marches. These were beginning to attract Muslims from other countries in large numbers. This in itself was a threat but what worried the Saudis more was the manner in which the political consciousness of the people, and especially Saudi citizens, was being raised. They feared, with good reason, that if such marches continued, they would not only grow larger, and therefore, almost totally out of control, but the people would also begin to see through the hypocrisy of the House of Saud. After all, even Saudi propaganda presents Israel as the enemy of Muslims. Yet, America, which underwrites every Israeli crime against the Muslims, is also a close friend of the House of Saud. The Iranian marches, by raising slogans against the US, Israel and the Soviet Union, were exposing the duplicity of the Saudi rulers.

Another theory suggests that the Saudi soldiers panicked and over-reacted when a rumour spread among them that General Mansour Khayyat, the commanding officer, had been killed. At one stage

during the Saudi attack, Khayyat apparently had dropped his walkie-talkie and was out of contact with his officers on the ground for a while. This view suggests that not only all the soldiers heard about Khayyat's 'death' but that they were so loyal to him that they went on a rampage — to avenge his death. This is hardly plausible. The tight control under which the Saudi soldiers operate leaves little room for independent action. Furthermore, Khayyat soon re-established contact with his commanders and there would be no further need to continue the mass slaughter, if indeed that is what had triggered the panic. Besides, the Saudi attack came from different directions: the Post Office building, the Makkah municipality building, its car park and from around Masjid al-Jinn.

The most plausible explanation is that the Americans forced the Saudis into this precipitous act. This view is also supported by several other developments. The Americans had been positioning themselves in the Persian Gulf for a direct attack on Iran for some time. Through their allies, the British and the French, diplomatic rows were created with Iran, forcing the virtual closure of each other's embassies.[1] The US had also sent its warships into the Persian Gulf after the Iraqi attack on the US frigate *Stark* on May 17, 1987 in which 37 American sailors were killed.[2] While the attack was carried out by the Iraqis, official American propaganda gave the impression as if Iran was responsible. The US then manoeuvred a resolution in the Security Council on July 20 demanding that both Iran and Iraq ceasefire immediately. The US had assumed that like previous Security Council resolutions (September 27, 1980 and July 12, 1982), Iran would reject this one too. Instead, Iran's diplomats showed nimble footwork and kept both the US and the Security Council off-balance by not rejecting outright the July 20 resolution.[3]

Two days after this resolution, the US declared that it was providing naval escort to 11 Kuwaiti tankers that were now flying the American flag. The number of American warships in the Persian Gulf also increased dramatically. At first, the US's European allies balked at the idea of getting into another Lebanon-type situation, but then they gradually acquiesced. The Americans and their allies felt that Iran would, sooner or later, be forced to attack one of these ships which would provide the Americans the pretext to bomb Iran in the manner of the attack on Tripoli and Benghazi in Libya on April 14/15, 1986.[4] The Iraqis had been attacking Iran's oil tankers and merchant ships since the summer of 1984. Despite showing great restraint, Iran was

forced to retaliate.

Amid all this escalation, one of the Kuwaiti tankers, Al-Rekkah, renamed the Bridgeton, hit a mine in the Gulf on July 24, while under American escort. The US's inability to retaliate exposed it as a bully and a thug. Its humiliation in the Persian Gulf was becoming obvious for everyone to see. It was in this atmosphere that the Americans pushed the Saudis into this disastrous act. Prior to the Saudi attack, it was reported that the new US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Hume Haron, had held a detailed meeting with king Fahd in Riyadh. It is believed that Fahd, initially reluctant to go along with the plan, was convinced in this meeting. While there appeared to be a split in the Saudi ruling circles — Fahd, Nayef and Sultan advocating a hard-line while Abdullah opposing it — the hawks ultimately won. A German anti-terrorism expert, General Ulrich Wegener, had been in Saudi Arabia for nearly three months to plan the whole operation. The line given by the Americans was that the Iranians were getting better organized and that their marches were attracting Muslims, in ever increasing numbers from other countries as well. Unless these were checked, they will grow totally out of control in a few years and sweep the very foundations of the House of Saud. What better way to bring an end to these than by carrying out a massacre which would force a debate in the *Ummah* against such marches in the future? Also, the Americans promised full support in the propaganda campaign which would serve both Saudi and American designs. The attempt to turn the carnage into a Shi'i-Sunni conflict was immediately obvious. Also revealing was the manner in which Iran was being branded as the 'aggressor' even though hundreds of Iranian pilgrims were gunned down in cold blood. One supposedly Muslim writer even invited the Americans to attack Iran on behalf of the Sunni world.[5]

But looking at the issue from an historical perspective, the Saudi action was not unexpected even if the Iranians were too innocent to understand it. The House of Saud was placed in control of the Haramain by the British in order to contain the power of Islam.[6] While the Americans took over when Britain left after the Second World War, the Saudi role has not changed from the day Abdul Aziz ibn Saud was placed in power in the Arabian Peninsula.

This Saudi role needs further examination.

Notes

1: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 7, Toronto, June 16-30, 1987; *The Financial Times*, London, June 4, 1987; *The Globe and Mail*, Toronto, June 9, 1987; *Time*, August 17, 1987.

2: See, for instance, *Crescent International*, Vol. 16 No. 6, Toronto, June 1-15, 1987; *Time*, June 1, 1987; *US News & World Report*, May 25, 1987, June 8, 1987 and June 15, 1987.

3: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16 No. 16, Toronto, November 1-30,. 1987. Interview with Dr Sai'ed Rajaie Khorassani, ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN.

4: *The Toronto Star*, January 11, 1988. An Associated Press story, datelined Berlin, quoting West Berlin justice department officials as saying that the discotheque bombing of April 5, 1986 was carried out by a 27-year-old West German woman, Christina Gabriele Endrigkeit, working for a Palestinian group and *not* the Libyan government.

5: *The Toronto Star*, August 9, 1987. G H Jansen, the author of a particularly vicious piece on the Makkah massacre was described as one 'who has covered the Middle East for many years, is a Sunni Muslim and took part in the 1973 Hajj'.

6: Report on the necessity of a trusted 'Muslim' British agent for intelligence purposes in Makkah, by Zohrab, Jeddah, June 1, 1881, British Foreign Office documents 195/1375; quoted by Al-Amr, Saleh Muhammad: *The Hijaz Under Ottoman Rule 1869-1914: Ottoman Vali, the Sharif of Mecca & the Growth of British Influence*; Ph.D thesis, Leeds University (UK), Riyadh University Publications, March 1978. p.171.

The tribe from Dar'iyyah

In 1744, there occurred in Nejd, central Arabia, an alliance that was to have far-reaching consequences for the whole of the Arabian Peninsula.[1] A puritanical preacher named Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab, influenced by the teachings of Imam Ibn Taimiyyah (d. 728/1328 CE), emerged in Nejd to try to cleanse Islam of its degrading accretions. In his zeal Abdul Wahhab ordered many shrines and tombs to be destroyed. As a self-proclaimed *qadi* (judge), he instituted death by stoning for those guilty of adultery. Nejd had no organized society at the time. People lived in tribes and wandered in the desert in search of water and food. Abdul Wahhab too had wandered eastwards towards the Persian Gulf but in quest of knowledge. He is reported to have gone through a phase of Sufism, finally settling for the strict interpretations of the Hanbali scholar Imam Ibn Taimiyyah.

But Abdul Wahhab did not find the Nejdis prepared to accept his strict and literal interpretations of the Qur'an. In 1744 he moved to Dar'iyyah, a few miles north of Riyadh where he was welcomed by the local chief, Muhammad ibn Saud. A local bully, Ibn Saud, needed a religious crutch to lend him respectability. The combination proved very potent. Inter-marriages took place between the children of Abdul Wahhab and Ibn Saud. The Saud bands, charged by religious zeal, moved outward subduing Riyadh and bringing virtually the whole of Nejd under their control.[2]

The children of Ibn Saud and Abdul Wahhab, now called Wahhabis,[3] inter-married and continued to raid settlements and caravans in the tradition of the Arab tribes of the time. In 1802 they turned to Makkah and Medina. When Taif, 40 miles south of Makkah, resisted, every male inhabitant that the Saudis could lay hands on was slaughtered. The terrified people of Makkah and Medina opened their gates in the

hope that they would be spared the fate of Taif. With the people subdued, the Saudis turned their attention to religious shrines and places of historical importance. These were smashed without regard to their significance in Islamic history. When the pilgrim caravans from Syria and Egypt arrived, they too were driven back as 'idolaters'. Thus, Muslims were prevented from performing Hajj, one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, by the Saudi raiders.

When news of the Taif massacre and pillage and destruction of Makkah and Medina reached the Sultan (*Khalifah*) in Constantinople, he was furious. The Hijaz, that contains the two holy cities of Makkah and Medina, was under Uthmaniyyah (Ottoman) jurisdiction. The Sultan ordered Muhammad Ali, his viceroy in Egypt, to punish the Saudi raiders. In 1813, Makkah and Medina were freed from Saudi control but taking Dar'iyyah, in the heart of the desert, proved more difficult. Finally, in 1819, Muhammad Ali's son, Ibrahim Pasha, defeated the Saudis and their capital, Dar'iyyah, was razed to the ground. The Saudis never rebuilt it. Instead, they carefully preserved Dar'iyyah, with its overgrowth of palm trees, like a ghost town, to remain a relic to their past glory. They moved down the Wadi Hanifah to Riyadh to build their new State, 'only to lose that in 1891 to the Ibn Rasheeds' from Hail.[4]

The ibn Saud, now led by Abdul Rahman fled eastward and sought refuge with Shaikh Mubarak al-Sabah in Kuwait. Abdul Rahman's son, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, the man credited with establishing the modern State of Saudi Arabia, was then in his early teens. While Abdul Rahman sulked in his tent on the outskirts of Kuwait, young Abdul Aziz went on raiding parties with members of other tribes. Looting and plundering was the way of the Arab bedouin. Abdul Aziz ibn Saud soon gained notoriety for his ruthlessness and guile.

In January 1902, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud led a group of men to stage an attack, by stealth, at the Mismak fortress in Riyadh. In the early morning raid, Ibn Rasheed's governor, Shaikh Ajlan, was slain and the garrison surrendered. Once dependent on the Ibn Rasheeds for survival after their rout from Dar'iyyah (1819), the Ibn Sauds had now become their mortal enemies. After the capture of Riyadh, other skirmishes followed with the Ibn Rasheeds, but Abdul Aziz survived either by stroke of good luck as at al-Dilam (1903) or by bribing tribes loyal to Ibn Rasheed. In 1905 he pledged loyalty to the Turkish Sultan but did everything to undermine it.[5] In April 1906, Abdul Aziz ibn

Saud killed Ibn Rasheed, also named Abdul Aziz, who had the backing of the Turks, at Rawdhat al-Muhanna, thus crippling the Ibn Rasheeds' power in Nejd.[6] In between, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud indulged in his favourite past-time, that of robbing caravans, without making distinction between merchants and pilgrims. In fact, robbing caravans was the favourite activity of all Arab chiefs; Abdul Aziz was simply the biggest thief.

Since his days in Kuwait, young Abdul Aziz had realized that control over his territory could only be exercised with external help and support. The Arab tribes were forever fighting each other. He could not turn to the Turks for help because they were supporting the Ibn Rasheeds. Abdul Aziz had witnessed how the other external power — Britain — had already assisted Shaikh Mubarak to retain control in Kuwait. Might not Britain be interested in helping Ibn Saud fight the Turks? Any overtures that Abdul Aziz made to Britain at that time were dismissed with contempt.[7] Imperial Britain was far too preoccupied with the Hijaz to pay any attention to an upstart Nejdi tribal chief. If Britain had a need for any Nejdis, their loyalty could be purchased at any time.

Britain's interest in the Hijaz was not only commercial, with the important Red Sea port at Jeddah, but also political. The British had realized that control of the area must not only be wrested from the Turks but placed in the hands of someone who would do Britain's bidding. The Hijaz, with the Haramain — the two holy cities of Makkah and Medina — was far too important to be left to the Muslims. The Haramain, and especially Makkah could 'be used as a focus of propaganda against the British government',[8] feared the British. In fact similar sentiments were expressed by Captain R F Burton (later Sir Richard Burton) in the early 1850's when he visited Makkah and Medina.[9] A few years later, the British Consul at Jeddah, Zohrab, spelled it out even more clearly:

'The point of real importance to England politically, I believe, the Hedjaz (*sic*), as the focus of Moslem (*sic*) thought and the nuclear (*sic*) from which radiate ideas, advice, instructions, and dogmatical implications...The Hedjaz is also a point of much political important (*sic*) to England and its relations with India...(Certain persons) I am persuaded, proceed on the Hadj (*sic*) for political reasons. Mecca being free for (*sic*) European intrusion is safe ground on which meetings can be held, ideas exchanged...Up to the present time we have kept no

watch on those who come and go,...thus meetings may be convened at Mecca at which combinations hostile to us may form without our knowing anything till the shell burst in our medst (*sic*)...If this Consulate could have a trusty Mussalman agent at Mecca, I believe a great deal of valuable intelligence could be obtained'.[10] In fact, he went further. Zohrab later claimed that since there were 60 million British Muslim subjects compared to Turkey's 16 million, Britain had a greater right to appoint the sharif (*amir*) at Makkah![11]

The appointment of the sharif at Makkah had devolved on the Turkish Sultan since the Hijaz was made a *vilayet* (province) of the Uthmaniyyah State in 1840. From the turn of the century, Britain cultivated independent links with the sharif at Makkah in an attempt to use him against the *Khalifah* in Constantinople (Istanbul). At the same time, through the infiltration of the Turkish forces and co-opting members of the Turkish armed forces into Masonic Lodges, Britain and France undermined the authority of the Sultan-Khalifah. In July 1908, young Turks, operating under the name of the Committee for Union and Progress, seized power and sent Sultan Abdul Hamid II into exile.[12] This opened the gates for the balkanization of the Middle East. Hussain ibn Ali, who was appointed *amir* of Makkah on November 1, 1908, now exercised far greater 'independence' from Constantinople than his predecessors had enjoyed. Propped up by British money and guns and the intrigues of British agents like T E Lawrence, Sharif Hussain, started to have visions of ruling the whole of Arabia, free from Turkish control. The British did everything to encourage him in this, for they needed the Arabs to rebel against Turkey. This was the classic British policy of divide and rule. They promised Sharif Hussain the throne of the whole of Arabia in return for his rebellion against the Turks.

Long before this British promise to Hussain ibn Ali, the Turks had seen through their game. In a candid and quite perceptive commentary in the Makkan newspaper, *Hijaz*, the Turks expressed their suspicions of the British designs on the Hijaz. 'Those who watch the English Government can see that her designs are directed towards the holiest places of Islam. She wishes to occupy them but she knows that achieving such a purpose would not be an easy matter, and she therefore tries by the most devilish means to reach this end'.[13] As events progressed, Britain's 'devilish' plans unfolded much as Turkey had predicted.

Before the outbreak of the First World War, Turkey had already lost much of its possessions in North Africa and Europe. Italy had invaded and occupied Tripolitania (Libya) in 1911; Greece grabbed Macedonia and Crete the following year and Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina in eastern Europe were lost by 1913. When the war broke out, Turkey under the Young Turks, joined hands with Germany, much to the chagrin of Britain whose conspiracy had brought them to power in the first place. But ever the masters of intrigue, the British went to work on their Arab allies. A Captain Shakespear was dispatched to secure Abdul Aziz's support at the end of 1914. Shakespear met an ignominious death in the company of Ibn Saud's soldiers in the battle of Jarrab against the Ibn Rasheeds in early 1915. Thus came to an end Abdul Aziz ibn Saud's contribution to the British war effort in the First World War. Much of eastern Arabia was also slipping out of his control in 1916.

But Abdul Aziz was still a minor figure in Arab politics and British designs. Hussain ibn Ali, the sharif of Makkah, commanded much greater authority. Between July 1915 and January 1916, Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, promised British support for 'Arab independence' after the war, in return for the Hashemite attack, with British aid, on the Turks. 'The Arab Revolt', as it came to be called, not only proved the undoing of the Turks but also of the Arabs themselves since the British had no intention of honouring their pledges. While promising Sharif Hussain the throne of 'the whole of Arabia', the British also pledged to give Palestine to the Jews through the infamous Balfour Declaration of November 1917.[14]

In a meeting in December 1915, between Abdul Aziz ibn Saud and Sir Percy Cox, the British political resident in the Persian Gulf, whom Abdul Aziz met for the first time, the Anglo-Saudi friendship treaty was signed. This treaty recognized Abdul Aziz's authority in the Nejd, under the protection of Britain. Military protection as well as British superintendence of his foreign policy formally coopted Abdul Aziz into the British orbit. Guns and money were now offered to Abdul Aziz as well — £20,000 annually in cash, later to be increased to £60,000 — for attacking Turkish allies in eastern Arabia. A year later, Abdul Aziz was the newest satellite at the gathering of British clients in the 'Kuwait Darbar' presided over by Percy Cox. In the Hijaz, Hussain ibn Ali's forces with British advisors, were busy sabotaging the Hijaz Railway while Abdul Aziz's bedouins were attacking Turkish

allies in eastern Arabia, all in the service of British imperialism (or the infidels as the Wahhabis would call them).

But those who serve masters other than Allah can experience sudden changes of fortune. Abdul Aziz also discovered this in early 1918 when British policy once again shifted to supporting the Hashemite army which was about to enter Damascus. He had to do with much less in British guns and money but then beggars can't be choosers. Western intrigue and especially the Anglo-French conspiracy for the Middle East came into the open after the Bolsheviks accidentally stumbled upon the Sykes-Picot agreement following the overthrow of the Czar in Russia in November 1917. The Anglo-French treaty had been worked out in February 1916 between Sir Mark Sykes of Britain and Georges Picot of France which totally contradicted the promises made to the Arabs to entice them to rebel against Turkish authority.

Abdul Aziz, however, knew his family history well. If his forefathers had struck a potent combination with the Wahhabis more than a century ago and captured Makkah and Medina, albeit briefly, could he not repeat the feat, perhaps with some refinements? Using his guile, he turned to the Wahhabi Ikhwan, then centred around Al-Artawiya. From around 1912, Abdul Aziz had cultivated and settled them in and around Riyadh, especially near Ghot Ghot. The Otayba, the Mutair, the Ajman and a number of other tribes were brought in, not with promises of money, but religious purification. Had the Ikhwan known that Abdul Aziz was on the payroll of the British, the infidels, they would certainly have branded him an infidel too and beheaded him. Abdul Aziz knew that there were two kinds of wars: political and religious. The former involved compromise but in the latter one either killed or was killed. There was no compromise, certainly not with the Ikhwan around.

At the end of the war when Britain wanted to terminate Abdul Aziz's subsidies, he felt thoroughly disappointed. The British had kept both him and Sharif Husain on their payroll to prevent them from fighting each other. This would have resulted in unravelling all the gains Britain had made in the Middle East.[15] While not fulfilling the promise to make Hussain ibn Ali the king of all Arabia, the British installed one of Hussain's sons, Abdullah, as the *amir* of Transjordan and another, Feisal, as the king of Iraq in 1921. At the end of 1921, Abdul Aziz requested a meeting with Sir Percy Cox, in hopes of getting a raise in his subsidies. The meeting took place at Uqair but Abdul Aziz

didn't get a raise. Instead, in the autumn of 1923, the British foreign office informed both Abdul Aziz and Sharif Hussain that their subsidies would end by the spring of 1924.[16]

But even before this came into force, Mustafa Kemal, the new dictator of Turkey, announced, in early 1924, that the *khilafat* was abolished. Sharif Hussain, then in Transjordan, immediately proclaimed himself *khalifah*. Abdul Aziz realized that this was his opportunity, for Hussain's proclamation would not be viewed with favour in the Muslim world. First, because Hussain ibn Ali was known as a British agent who had led the 'Arab Revolt' against the *khalifah*. This was something the Muslims could not forgive. Second, Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud's own links with the British were less well known since he was still an obscure figure in Central Arabia. Thus, he could claim to get rid of Sharif Hussain on behalf of the Muslims and earn their gratitude.

This development, of course, suited the British as well. Hussain had already become troublesome after the British reneged on their promise of making him the king of the whole of Arabia. His sons had nearly wrecked the Cairo Conference in 1921 by walking out. The British now favoured Abdul Aziz over Hussain to become the ruler of the Hijaz. For Britain, it simply meant a change of faces but an arrangement in which the feelings of the Muslims around the world would be contained. Thus, Abdul Aziz was given the green light to attack Makkah. Without British support, Hussain ibn Ali's forces were no match for those of Ibn Saud.

The latest Saudi assault on Makkah began, again, with the massacre of the inhabitants of Taif, 40 miles south of Makkah, in September 1924. This was a repeat performance of the Saudi slaughter in 1802. Estimates as to the number of people killed in the latest assault ranged from 400[17] to 900[18]. It was carried out without mercy. All male inhabitants were put to the sword, even those who had sought sanctuary in the mosque. They also destroyed the mosques after beheading their captives there. This struck terror in the hearts of the residents of Makkah, when the news reached them. The slaughter shocked the seventy thousand or so pilgrims who were assembled for Hajj. They condemned 'the Wahhabites' savagery' in the strongest possible terms.[19] A year earlier, in July 1923, Ibn Saud's forces had attacked and massacred nearly 5,000 pilgrims from Yemen.[20] With such news and the slaughter perpetrated by Ibn Saud's men at Taif, the

majority of Makkah's residents fled to Jeddah. The remainder barricaded themselves inside their homes as Ibn Saud's men continued the pillage, destroying tombs, shrines and mosques.[21] Many of his men came with guns while in *ihram*. The Saudis, in the name of purifying Islam from idolatrous accretions, themselves violated many of the fundamental commandments of the Qur'an — sanctity of the Haram, safety of the *hujjaj* (the guests of Allah), and carrying weapons in *ihram*. When Makkah fell to Ibn Saud, he was quick to issue a disclaimer to any personal designs upon the throne of the Hijaz or the *khilafat*. He said: 'I have no intentions of extending my territory beyond my possessions in Nejd, but it is my duty to rid the Hedjaz (*sic*) and *my people* of the cruelty of the Sheriff (*sic*)'[22] (emphasis added). This, like many of his previous pledges was designed to placate the feelings of the Muslims worldwide. The Muslims were appalled by the cruelty perpetrated by the forces of Ibn Saud on innocent, defenceless people. The contradiction in his statement was obvious. While disavowing any claims on the Hijaz, he was, at the same time, claiming to speak on behalf of its *people*. Abdul Aziz's pledge to the world's Muslims would prove as hollow as his promise to the Wahhabi Ikhwan who, as his foot-soldiers, fought to establish Ibn Saud's rule in Makkah and, on December 5, 1925, in Medina. The old Hussain ibn Ali had already fled from Makkah to Jeddah from whence he was taken on an old British steamer into exile in Cyprus.

Abdul Aziz ibn Saud had arrived to control the Haramain with the help of the British, under the cloak of religion. The British plan of controlling the holy cities of Makkah and Medina through a 'Mussalman agent' had finally been realized through Ibn Saud. In January 1926, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud declared himself the new king of the Hijaz in the company of the *imam* of the Masjid al-Haram.

In taking this step, he said he was forced to do so because of the 'indifference of foreign Muslims' to his several requests for advice on the holy places. The proposal to declare himself king, however, he said had come from the merchants and notables of Jeddah which he readily accepted! Only fourteen months earlier he was swearing having any intentions to the throne of the Hijaz, vowing not to extend his 'territory beyond my possessions in Nejd'.

But Abdul Aziz, like his British pay masters, was playing a double role. His promises to the Ikhwan to establish a State where the Islamic *Shari'ah* would be supreme, ran contrary to his subservience to the

British. He kept the Ikhwan in the dark about the money he was receiving from them. Had they known about his British links, it is certain that they would have branded him 'an infidel', and far from fighting *for* him, they would have rebelled against him. It can be said with certainty that had the Ikhwan known this, there would be no 'Saudi Kingdom' today.

Abdul Aziz now had to choose between the Ikhwan and the British. But he delayed the hour of reckoning as much as he could. In the meantime, he continued to enjoy the good life that kingship brought in its wake. As king of the Hijaz, he was also in receipt of the pilgrims' not inconsiderable revenues that flowed into his coffers every year. With these he began to acquire guns, cars and other items of luxury. At the end of 1926, he rode in a cavalcade to Riyadh where he declared himself the king of Nejd as well. Now he had two kingdoms under his control — the Hijaz and Nejd. He remained the king of two kingdoms until 1932 when the 'kingdom of Saudi Arabia' was proclaimed.

From 1926 onwards, the Ikhwan's dissatisfaction with Abdul Aziz grew. They went back to their settlements leaving Makkah, Medina, Jeddah and Riyadh to him. But they were not left alone in their desert wilderness. The British, with their imperial ambitions, were drawing arbitrary lines across the desert to establish borders for Transjordan, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. British imperialism now came in conflict with the Arabs of the desert. This suited Ibn Saud fine. He too was anxious to subdue the Ikhwan. There was no more territory to 'conquer'. As a British client, he understood his limits well. He, therefore, had no more need for the Ikhwan and certainly had no intention of establishing a puritanical State based on the strict application of the *Shari'ah*. That would have meant an end to the murky wheeling and dealing for which Abdul Aziz and his progeny have become notorious. The implementation of the harsher aspects of the *Shari'ah* was kept strictly outside the walls of the palace to terrorize the populace into submission. Inside, license was given to indulge in every vice.

A series of wars were fought against the Ikhwan throughout 1928 and 1929. Some of the well-known encounters occurred in 1929.[23] The first took place at Sabillah near Al-Artawiya (March 1929) in which Faisal al-Daweesh of the Mutair and Sultan ibn Bijad of the Otayba were defeated. Al-Daweesh was wounded while Ibn Bijad was imprisoned. Ibn Saud also ordered the complete demolition of Ghot Ghot, the

Ikhwan stronghold. In May 1929, Dhaidhan ibn Hithlain of the Ajman was tricked by Fahd, the son of Abdullah ibn Jaluwi, and while negotiating terms for peace, he (Dhaidhan) was murdered. This treachery threw all of Nejd into rebellion against the Ibn Saud. The Ajman, Otayba and Mutair got together but Britain supported its client, Ibn Saud, massively with guns, planes, vehicles and intelligence data. In August 1929, Azaiyiz, Faisal al-Daweesh's son, made a desperate bid to fight against Ibn Saud's British-backed troops at Um Urdhumah. After bitter hand-to-hand fighting, Azaiyiz and his men were defeated. He died of thirst in the desert and his skeleton was recovered many months later. This effectively broke the back of the Ikhwan revolt which continued for a little while longer. Their camels and swords were no match for the motorcades, guns and the cunning of the British. Britain had not only financed Abdul Aziz but backed him, first, against Hussain ibn Ali and, later, against the Ikhwan.

The British had come to stay in the Arabian Peninsula. Free from the influence of the Ikhwan, Ibn Saud now flung open his 'kingdom' to foreigners. The British, as usual, were there ahead of everyone else. Harry St John Philby, father of Kim Philby who gained notoriety when he defected to Moscow in the early sixties, was an eccentric Englishman. He claimed to have embraced Islam and became an 'advisor' to the now old and limping Abdul Aziz ibn Saud. (He was not really that old but nearly blind in one eye and in poor health). Philby began to direct Saudi policy on all matters.

He came none too soon, for the 'great depression' had descended upon the world. With it the pilgrim traffic declined, decimating Abdul Aziz ibn Saud's revenues. He was in desperate need of cash. But relief came by way of the Americans through one Charles R Crane. Crane, a plumber from Chicago, had made a fortune out of providing relief for his fellow countrymen by selling them sanitary wares. Crane had already gained some experience of the Middle East when president Woodrow Wilson had sent him in 1919, together with Dr Henry King — thus the King-Crane Commission — to ascertain the wishes of the people of Palestine towards the partition scheme which would create a zionist State there. In 1931, Crane came back looking for Arabian horses but ended up signing an agreement to prospect for oil in the vast emptiness of the Arabian desert. Oil, the black gold, had already been discovered in Iran in 1908, and in Bahrain the Standard Oil Company of California — Socal — struck it in 1932. After a

preliminary survey through Crane's agent, Philby, now also working as an agent for Socal, brokered an agreement giving the American company a sixty-year concession in Hasa, eastern Arabia. The Americans agreed to pay Abdul Aziz in gold sovereigns. Socal, later transformed into the Arabian American Oil Company, Aramco, first struck oil in March 1938. More oil was discovered in mid-1938 and Arabia under Ibn Saud was already on its way to new fortunes when the Second World War broke out.

The Americans could no longer afford to risk their tankers on the long journey to the Persian Gulf bringing oil. Thus, Ibn Saud's fortunes began to decline again. But along came the British to his rescue, once again. In 1940, even while Britain was tightening its belt at home, it sent food and supplies to Abdul Aziz to pacify the hungry — and angry — people and to keep their protege in power until after the war.

The war years were lean times for all, especially Abdul Aziz ibn Saud who was dependent upon revenues from pilgrims, the sale of dates, hand-outs from the British and revenues from oil. The war had affected everything. The pilgrims' numbers declined to 32,000 in 1940. The dates, already affected by drought in Nejd, were not sold in such large quantities since there were fewer pilgrims to buy them. The British could ill-afford to pay large sums to him during the war just as the Americans did not want to risk their tankers.

But Abdul Aziz must consider himself extremely fortunate. In 1943, the Americans suddenly discovered that as a gas station for the allied war effort, they were pumping out 63 percent of the world's oil consumption daily. At this rate, they were depleting their reserves at the rate of three percent annually. This was a frightening realization for a country beginning to have visions of becoming a superpower soon. The US interior secretary, Harold L Ickes, came up with an ingenius plan 'to save American oil: burn foreign oil'.[24] A US memorandum of December 1942 had already recorded 'that the development of Saudi Arabian petroleum resources should be viewed in the light of the broad national interests'.[25] Armed with such 'vital interests' to protect, the Americans arrived with the Lend-Lease agreement which was signed in February 1943. Some $33 million poured into Abdul Aziz's coffers in two years after the signing of the agreement over and above oil revenues. While the Americans were robbing Arabia with both hands, cash-strapped Abdul Aziz thought he had hit a pot of gold. Like a feudal lord, he distributed the revenues

from oil among his sons, relatives and sycophants, as if it was his private fortune.

Since 1943, the Americans have not looked back. Throughout the fifties and sixties, American companies paid whatever they felt like for a barrel of oil. In August 1960, for instance, Monroe Rathbone, the chief executive officer of Esso, today's Exxon, unilaterally decided to slash the price his company would pay to oil producers from $2 to $1.80. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, did not exist then. Even so, for two years after it was formed on September 9, 1960, the Americans refused to recognize or deal with it.

But America's interest in Saudi Arabia was not confined to oil alone. As successor to Britain's mantle as a superpower, America now took it upon itself to police the world. And among all its clients, Saudi Arabia held the key to controlling the Muslim world because of the Haramain — the two holy places of Islam — as the British had realized before the turn of the century.

Production of oil brought American technicians and 'advisors' in its wake. Later, the US military also joined in. Saudi princes were flown to America and introduced to the American version of 'modernization' and corruption. So impressed were the Saudis by the American way of life that they began to import everything from the US, including sand. Concrete jungles began to sprout in the middle of the desert, much like the monstrosities that the Americans have created in New York, Chicago or Houston. The Saudis couldn't pay fast enough to import these American-style cities to their land awash in oil wealth.

Saudi Arabia's importance in the US scheme of things would have declined but for two developments that forced a re-evaluation of US thinking. One was the OPEC price-hike in October 1973 after the limited war that Egypt and Syria fought against the zionist State. The other, more serious, was the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in February 1979. The successive wars between the Arabs and the zionists were designed to drive home the point to the Arabs that Israel was an 'invincible power' and unless the Arabs came to terms with it, they would lose even more. Along the same lines, the Americans wanted to use the Saudis to break the power of OPEC. The manner in which the price of oil crashed from a high of nearly $36 per barrel in 1981 to almost $10 at the beginning of 1987 was achieved primarily through the Saudis.[26]

The wars of June 1967 and October 1973 between the Arabs and the zionists were designed to pave the way for the Arab rulers' surrender to Israel. The Arabs' temporary and limited victory in October 1973 was conceded in order to redeem some of their lost honour. Anwar Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, exactly sixty years after Balfour's infamous declaration, was a confirmation of the Muslims' fate as a defeated people. But the uprising against the shah in 1978 and the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in February 1979 badly upset these American designs for the world of Islam. In their arrogance, however, they thought that the Islamic Revolution will prove another passing phenomenon, much like the Algerian revolution or Nasser's nationalism in Egypt.

The Saudi role too has undergone a curious transformation. Nasser was viewed by the Saudis with much apprehension because of his revolutionary rhetoric. The Ba'ath Party, in Iraq and Syria, was an even more extreme mutant of the kind of nationalism espoused by Nasser. Thus, the Saudis always felt threatened by Ba'athism. This led them into a close working relation with the shah of Iran, another US client in the region, against the radical Ba'athists who were aligned with the Soviet Union. However, immediately after the success of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the rise of Saddam Husain as the absolute ruler in Iraq, the Saudi policy changed radically. This was not the result of any softening of attitude on the part of Saddam. The change occurred in the perception of the House of Saud. When faced by the emergence of the power of Islam in Iran, the Saudis even became prepared to strike a deal with the hated Ba'athists. Thus, Saudi Arabia today is a close ally of Saddam Husain and the principal financier of his war against the Islamic State of Iran.

The west, and especially the Americans, too have done everything to destroy the young, fledgling Islamic Republic. The internal uprisings, sabotage and assassination of leading figures of the Islamic Revolution were all part of a policy to bring the Islamic Republic to its knees. When everything else failed to shake the faith of the Iranian people in Islam, a full-fledged invasion was launched through Iraq. This invasion was supposed to destroy the Islamic Republic and replace it by a military dictatorship of America's choosing. The Iraqi Ba'athists were and still are financed by their Arab brothers, armed by the Soviet Union, France, Britain and Romania and given political and military support and intelligence data by the US. More than seven years after

the Ba'athist invasion, the Islamic State of Iran has, with the help of Allah, singlehandedly withstood the combined might of *kufr*. Not only have the Ba'athist invaders been driven out of Iran but military operations have been taken into Iraqi territory itself. Despite a contribution of more than $181 billion by the Arab regimes to the Iraqi war effort,[27] the Ba'athists are still on the run.

The Saudis have worked closely with the US in this conspiracy against Islam. The AWACS planes that were hurriedly sent to Saudi Arabia in early 1981 were designed not to protect Saudi oil fields but to gather intelligence data on Iran's troop movements and pass it on to Iraq.[28] Then in mid-1986, the US provided complete layout details of Kharg Island, Iran's main oil-loading terminal in the Persian Gulf, for Iraq to attack. At the same time, the Saudis were asked to flood the market with oil. The plan was to destroy Iran's oil export capability while the Saudis would make up for the shortfall. Even prior to this, the Saudis together with the Kuwaitis, had been pumping an extra 300,000 barrels of oil per day on behalf of Iraq. The oil war launched against Iran turned out to be more damaging for the Saudis and the Americans than Iran. Oil-producing states in the US such as Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana have suffered considerably as a result of the oil price crash.

1986 was a bad year for US president Reagan and America. First, the Iraqis lost Faw peninsula to Iran in February 1986. It was followed by major Iraqi losses in Kurdistan. In November, news broke out of Reagan's secret attempts to try to establish relations with the Islamic State of Iran. A team led by Reagan's former national security advisor, Robert McFarlane, had tried to sneak into Iran carrying forged Irish passports. At first the US denied the story but when Iran's Majlis speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani confirmed that the Americans had tried to establish a dialogue with Iran through the McFarlane visit, a crisis erupted in the White House. A number of senior Reagan aids had to resign or were fired. America's European allies were furious at being double-crossed: the US was secretly shipping arms to Iran while outwardly leading the drive to impose an arms embargo. The US's Arab allies felt even more let down. For years they had presented themselves as close allies of the US. This had also put many of these rulers at great personal risk with their own people. Yet, the US was secretly sending weapons to Iran. The Arabs took this as a great snub. But what could they do? They huffed and puffed but then calmed down, hoping that the US would do something to redeem whatever

little honour they had left.

The crisis in the Persian Gulf, the decision to flag Kuwaiti tankers and the US sabre-rattling against Iran in early 1987 were designed to achieve two things: divert attention at home from what came to be called the Iran-Contra affair and to restore US credibility among its Arab clients. The Arab regimes and especially Saudi Arabia and Bahrain put their military bases and facilities at the disposal of the US for a showdown with Iran. The massacre in Makkah was part of this devilish plan to cast Iran in a bad light. Iran had to be 'punished' not only for what it was or was not doing *vis-a-vis* the war, but because it had upset the US plan for the Arab regimes' surrender to Israel. The Makkah massacre was an ingenious plan in which America would emerge the winner regardless of the outcome. If the plan succeeded by turning the issue into a Shi'i-Sunni conflict, then the US could claim to have the 'support' of the rest of the Muslim world in its attack against Iran. If it failed, the Americans would disclaim any responsibility for it and let Fahd bear the consequences.

Since the Makkah massacre and despite the great propaganda effort by the Saudi regime, the Muslim world's attention has been focused on the question of the future of the Haramain and the illegitimacy of the House of Saud as its 'guardian'. Already there are reports that among the 'Saudi princes', a serious debate is going on about Fahd's pro-American leanings and his drinking problem.[29] There are rumours that they would like to see Fahd replaced before his policies lead to further disasters. Fahd's replacement would not be the first instance. Saud was replaced by Faisal in 1964 because of his antics. At that time, the House of Saud did not have to contend with the rising tide of Islam; the Sauds then claimed to be the standard-bearers of Islam and few challenged their self-styled role as champions of Islam.

This argument is further supported by revelations made in Bob Woodward's book on the CIA.[30] The Saudis' close involvement in the CIA's dirty wars, their contribution to the Contras' fund on behalf of the US and their helping the bombing plot to assassinate Shaikh Fadhlallah in Beirut in March 1985, have all tarnished Fahd's image. The Saudis have made a meek denial of these revelations[31] but few believe them. It has been asked, for instance, that if Woodward's allegations were not true, why haven't the Saudis sued him for libel?

The US's plan may well be to expose Fahd's strong pro-US leanings to

get rid of him. Too close an identification with the US is a sure prescription for disaster. Even the US doesn't like it after its experience with the shah of Iran. Since the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the US has refined the technique of getting rid of its favourite clients who become too closely identified with it. The execution of Anwar Sadat in October 1981, while a great loss to the US, did not make much difference to their policy. In fact, they were glad to get rid of him because it took the fury out of the anti-Sadat and anti-US feelings in Egypt even though the execution was carried out by a group that wanted to remove US-zionist influence from Egypt. The same experiment was repeated with Marcos in the Philippines. Could it be any different with Fahd? He has probably sealed his fate by being too closely identified with the US.[32]

Notes

1: Fazlur, Rahman. *Islam*, A Doubleday Anchor Book, New York, 1968. pp.240-247.

2: Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud*, Avon Books, New York, 1981. pp.56-57.

3: The Saudis prefer to call themselves *salafis*, the third generation of Muslims after the Prophet, but the label Wahhabi, after their founder Muhammad Abdul Wahhab, has stuck.

4: Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud*, Avon Books, New York, 1981. pp.56-57.

5: *Ibid.*, p.69.

6: *Ibid.*, pp.81-82.

7: Howarth, David. *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud*, Collins, London, 1984. pp.43-44.

8: Al-Amr, Saleh Muhammad. *The Hijaz Under Ottoman Rule 1869-1914: Ottoman Vali, the Sharif of Mecca & the Growth of British Influence*, Riyadh University Publications, 1978. pp.171-174.

9: Burton, Richard F. *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*, Vol. 2 pp.185. London, quoted in Al-Amr, op. cit.

10: Al-Amr, p.172.

11: *Ibid.*, p.177.

12: Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud*, Avon Books, New York, 1981. p.85.

13: *Hijaz*, No. 1896, 25 Safar 1433 (1914). p.1.

14: *A Survey of Palestine: 1945-1946*, Vol. 1. p.1. See also Hadawi, Sami: *Bitter Harvest: Palestine 1914-79*, The Caravan Books, Delmar, New York, 1979 and Said, Edward: *The Question of Palestine*, Vintage Books, a division of Random House, New York, 1979.

15: Al-Rashid, Ibrahim (ed). *Documents on the History of Saudi Arabia*, Vol. 1, Documentary Publications, Salisbury, NC, US, 1976. pp.81-82. On March 2, 1922, Winston Churchill, then secretary of State for the colonies, in reply to questions in the House of Commons, confirmed that the following sums were being paid to Arab rulers:

— Ibn Saud: £5000/month plus a lump sum payment of £20,000	£80,000
— Hussain ibn Ali: £5000/month from August 1, 1921 and a lump sum payment of £20,000	£60,000
— Other rulers	£10,000
— Total	£150,000

Churchill also confirmed that this sum prevented these rulers from acting *against* British interests. In any case, the wily Churchill revealed: 'we only pay for value received'.

16: Howarth, David. *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud*, Collins, London, 1984. p.138.

17: *Ibid.*, p.143.

18: Al-Rashid, Ibrahim (ed). *Documents on the history of Saudi Arabia*, Vol. II, Documentary Publications, Salisbury, NC, US, 1976. p.167.

19: *Ibid.*, p.163-164. The translation of a telegram, sent from Makkah dated September 12, 1924, on behalf of 70,000 pilgrims 'from Java, Mindanao, Indonesia, Persians, Muslim Russia subjects...etc' to the US secretary of State in Washington, DC confirmed the slaughter at Taif by 'the Wahhabites'.

20: *Ibid.*, p.106.

21: Howarth, David. *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud*, Collins, London, 1984. pp.142-143.

22: Al-Rashid, Ibrahim (ed). *Documents on the history of Saudi Arabia*, Vol II, Documentary Publications, Salisbury, NC, US, 1976. p.168.

23: For an account of the Ikhwan revolt, see, for instance, Helms, Christine Moss. *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, Croom Helm, London, 1981. pp.250-274.

24: Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia and the House of Saud*, Avon Books, New York, 1981. p.262.

25: *Ibid.*, p.263.

26: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16., No. 3, Toronto, April 16-30, 1986; p. 1.

27: *Al-Musawwar*, Cairo, August 27, 1987.

28: Siddiqui, Kalim (ed). *Issues in the Islamic Movement: 1980-81*, Toronto, London, 1982. pp.313-316.

29: *The San Francisco Chronicle*, December 21, 1987.

30: Woodward, Bob. *Veil: The secret wars of the CIA 1981-1987*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1987. pp.31, 352-355, 401.

31: *Maclean's*, Toronto, November 2, 1987. Interview with Saudi foreign minister Saud al-Faisal during his visit to Canada.

32: Woodward, Bob. *Veil: The secret wars of the CIA 1981-1987*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1987. pp.395-398.

The Qur'anic view of Hajj

The west's impact on the world of Islam has been devastating. Not only did the west disrupt the Muslims' political life —despite its imperfections and deviations from the life-example of the Prophet and the Khulafa-e Rashideen — but it also subverted the culture of Islam. Even when Muslims gained independence, it was fraudulent at best and in a framework at odds with the values of Islam. The west left behind westernized elites, Muslims in name but completely western in outlook and subservient to it, to rule Muslim societies. Colonialism had given way to neo-colonialism with a more devastating impact.

The last hundred years in particular have witnessed a gradual but inexorable drift away from the teachings of the Qur'an among Muslims, especially those in positions of authority. In fact, the Qur'an itself, a most revolutionary and political Book and Allah's revelation and guidance for all mankind, has been depoliticized. Islam has been secularized together with Muslim societies. Many westernized elites have also come to view Islam in the same light as the west sees Christianity. They have rendered unto Caesar what is believed to be his and left the left-overs to God. It is this separation of the divine and the temporal that is being imposed by the ruling elites upon the *Ummah* today that is at the root of the problem. While the *Ummah* does not necessarily share this outlook, it must be conceded that in many respects, the secularization of Islam has affected some fundamental pillars of the faith as well.

Hajj is a good example. Always, the annual assembly of the *Ummah* and very political in nature — deriving its basis from the struggle of Prophet Ibrahim, upon whom be peace, who was the first 'rebel' against *taghut* — today it is being reduced to rituals. The idea of Hajj as a mere ritual has been so deeply ingrained in the minds of Muslims

that efforts to restore it to its Qur'anic basis are viewed with hostility and alarm in some quarters. The *manasik* (rituals) of Hajj are indeed important but they cannot be separated from the political message contained therein. Prophet Ibrahim, upon whom be peace, challenged the authority of Nimrod and faced his wrath by being thrown in fire because he submitted to the only authority, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. The challenge to worldly authority that Prophet Ibrahim initiated is forever alive and reflected in the *talbiya* that the *hujjaj* recite as they discard everything of this world and don the *ihram*. *Labbayka allahuma Labbayk, Labbayka la Sharika laka Labbayk (Here I come, O Lord, here I come. Here I come, O Lord. You have no partners, here I come...)*, is such a powerful and uncompromising assertion of every Muslim's commitment to the One and Only God, Allah, that it demolishes all else before it. Yet, it is also a sad fact that many Muslims, while reciting this, do so mechanically without realizing its true impact. The same is true of many other aspects of Hajj. Indeed, a great effort is being made by the regime in control of the Haramain and its retinue of court *ulama* as well as other regimes in the Muslim world to neutralize and depoliticize Hajj. In their designs, they do not even hesitate to distort the very message and meaning of the Qur'an.

The proponents of the 'no politics in Hajj' policy base their argument on the narrow interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: 'there is (to be) no lewdness nor abuse nor angry conversation on the pilgrimage' (2:197). While one does not have to look very hard or far even near the Masjid al-Haram in Makkah to find signs of lewdness, few have raised questions about this Saudi violation of the Qur'anic injunction. But another part of the same verse has been made the centre of controversy. The Qur'anic term *jidal* (argument) has been interpreted to mean that during Hajj there is to be no arguments and certainly no demonstrations that would lead to arguments. No distinction is made between whether the argument is to establish a point of *haqq* (truth) or *batil* (falsehood). This narrow interpretation of the word *jidal*, as given by the Saudis, is not shared by many leading and authoritative *muffassirun* of the Qur'an.

Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abu 'Abdullah al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH/1273 CE) has given six views on *jidal* in his *tafsir*, *al-Jami li-Ahkam al-Qur'an*. While following the Maliki *fiqh*, Imam al-Qurtubi presents different opinions without polemics. His *tafsir* includes references to many *ahadith* and is sensitive to popular Muslim piety, jurisprudence and linguistic considerations. Quoting Ibn Mas'ood and Ibn 'Abbas,

Al-Qurtubi says that *jidal* means to argue until one side is angered enough to start insulting the other. He further adds that as far as discussion during Hajj relating to *'ilm* is concerned, there is no prohibition. A second view quoted by Al-Qurtubi, is that of Qatada which refers to *jidal* as insult. Some authorities have referred to *jidal* as arguments to prove one's Hajj to be better than others or to brag about family pride, nationalism, tribalism, etc. But the two interpretations preferred by Al-Qurtubi, which are narrated on the authority of Ibn Zayd and Anas bin Malik, say that the Quraish and other tribes used to argue about the place and day of Hajj. This verse was, therefore, revealed by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* to put an end to such arguments.

Isma'il 'Imad al-Din Abu al-Fida ibn Kathir (d. 774/1373), the famous Shafi'i jurist, belonged to the 'conservative' trend in *tafsir*. Ibn Kathir's voluminous commentary *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim* is preferred by many scholars because of its traditional approach and broad sweep of Muslim history. He was a student and staunch defender of Imam Ibn Taimiyyah upon whose teachings the Wahhabis also allegedly base their strict literalist interpretations of Islamic law. According to Ibn Kathir, *jidal* means to get angry except at someone who has lost or destroyed one's property. He goes so far as to say that one is even allowed to hit a person during Hajj if one is so angered by the loss. In support of this, Ibn Kathir narrates the incident when Abu Bakr gently hit his servant for losing his camel during Hajj. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, who saw this, smiled and gently rebuked Abu Bakr, suggesting that the act was *makruh* (distasteful) but not *haram* (forbidden).

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn al-Tabataba'i (d. 1402/1981) in his voluminous work *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* says that *jidal* means to argue. Allama Tabataba'i, who belonged to the Ja'fari Ithna 'Ashari school of thought, often approached the verses of the Qur'an from philosophical, sociological and traditional viewpoints. But he has not given much detail of this particular verse beyond describing it as argument.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 606/1209) followed a philosophical trend in *tafsir*. His massive work, *al-Tafsir al-Kabir* is also commonly called *Mafatih al-Ghayb*. Razi describes *jidal* as argument and asks whether there is a total ban on it. He says that to argue for the sake of increasing one's *'ilm* and in matters of *din* in not only allowed but is in

obedience to Allah. According to Razi, there are, therefore, two types of *jidal*: that which is carried out to affirm *al-batil*, for example to gain prestige, power, position or wealth, etc., in the world which is forbidden; and the other which affirms the truth and calls to the way of Allah, which is praiseworthy.

From the foregoing, the great scholars of Islam have not only given a clear interpretation of the word *jidal* but also affirmed that any steps taken in the way of increasing one's knowledge or to establish Allah's commands are praiseworthy. Thus, demonstrations organized to affirm the truth and to proclaim the dissociation of the believers from the *mushrikeen* is to be commended. When 'Umar ibn al-Khattab accepted Islam in the sixth year of the Prophet's mission, a great demonstration, led on one side by 'Umar and the other by the Prophet's uncle, Hamza, was held at the Ka'aba.[1] Further, dissociation of the believers from the *mushrikeen* is a Qur'anic command which is most powerfully stated in the opening verses of *Surah al-Tauba* (also called *Surah Bara'at*). In this *surah* very stern warnings have been given to the *mushrikeen* and a clear order to the Muslims to end their treaties with them. Some *muffassirun* have commented that because of the stern warnings contained therein, this is the only *surah* in the Qur'an which does not start with the *Basmallah*. It is also called *al-Fadihah*, or the revealer of the *mushrikeen*. The first three verses of this *surah* are:

'Freedom from obligation (is proclaimed) from Allah and His messenger toward those of the *mushrikeen* with whom you made a treaty. Travel freely in the land four months, and know that Allah will confound the disbelievers (in His guidance). And a proclamation from Allah and His messenger to all men on the day of the greater pilgrimage (Hajj) that Allah is free from obligation to the *mushrikeen* and (so is) His messenger' (9:1-3). Indeed, a number of other verses of this *surah* were revealed in the 9th year of the *hijra* in the month of Dhil Hijjah when about 300 Muslims had already left for Makkah, led by Abu Bakr, to perform the Hajj. The Prophet, upon whom be peace, immediately dispatched Imam 'Ali, from Medina to Makkah, to announce these verses at the time of Hajj. The message contained in these verses is so political that it seems incredible that anyone would dare, unless he happens to be in open rebellion against the commandments of Allah, to even suggest that Hajj is only about rituals. These verses not only proclaim the dissociation of the believers from the *mushrikeen* but also order them to fight in the way of Allah against those who disbelieve. Surely, the Prophet, upon whom be

peace, could have waited until the *hujjaj* had returned from Makkah before announcing these verses. Yet, he chose not to do so. In the following year, when the Prophet himself went for Hajj, his Hajjat-ul Wida *khutbah* in Arafat is again a most powerful assertion of the political nature of Hajj.[2]

In the performance of Hajj, should Muslims, therefore, follow the likes and dislikes of the House of Saud or the commandments of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* and the *sunnah* of His beloved Prophet, upon whom be peace forever more?

A quick glance at Islamic history also provides this understanding of the role of Hajj. While Muslim history, since the time of the Khulafa-e Rashideen, has witnessed a progressive deviation from the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, it was only in the last 200 years or so that Muslims were subjugated by the forces of *kufr*. The earliest example of resistance to ungodly rule was presented by none other than Imam Husain, the great martyr of Islam and grandson of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Imam Husain went from Medina to Makkah for Hajj (although he did not complete it), before setting out for Kufa in 681. His *jihad* against the forces of Yazid provided the model that has been followed by Muslims ever since.

In recent history, Muslims have been confronted by the forces of *kufr* led by European colonialism. On their campaigns of plunder and exploitation, the Europeans arrived in Muslim lands to find the Muslims weak and divided. Muslim armies under corrupt rulers were no match for European guns or cunning, This is not to suggest that Muslims did not resist western colonialism. This resistance, however, did not come from the rulers but, for the most part, was spearheaded by the *ulama* and other revolutionary Muslims. And Hajj played a significant role in mobilizing and coordinating the resistance of the *Ummah* to colonialism in various parts of the world.

The short-lived *jihad* movement led by Sayyid Ahmad of Rae Bareli in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent was initiated only after he went for Hajj in 1822-3.[3] There, Sayyid Ahmad is believed to have discussed the plight of Muslims and Islam in India at the hands of the British colonialists as well as Hindu and Sikh chauvinists, with fellow Muslims in Makkah. Upon his return from Hajj, he organized the *jihad* movement which was joined by such other eminent personalities as Shah Isma'il (a grandson of Shah Wali Ullah/d. 1762). Both Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Isma'il were martyred at Balakot (in the North West

Frontier Province of Pakistan today) in a battle against the Sikhs in 1831. But the followers of Sayyid Ahmad continued their *jihad* against the British colonialists and their activities were reported in many parts of the Frontier province as late as 1890.

Another movement that preceded the *jihad* movement of Sayyid Ahmad *Shaheed* was initiated by Shari'at Ullah in Bengal at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Again, Hajj played a crucial role in his movement. Shari'at Ullah went for Hajj in 1782 and stayed in Makkah until 1802. During that time he became the disciple of a Shafi'i shaikh. Upon his return to Bengal he launched the Fara'idi movement whose main thrust was to rid India of the British 'because it was no longer *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) but had become *Dar al-Harb* (Abode of War)'.[4] His movement was also directed against the rich landlords who had no doubt benefitted from British patronage by helping them to consolidate their power over Muslims. Upon his death Shari'at Ullah's son, Dadhu Miyan, carried on the movement. The followers of this movement can still be found in some parts of Bengal.

These movements later developed into the first war of independence in 1857, inappropriately dubbed the Indian Mutiny, against British colonialism. A large number of *ulama* were also involved in the 1857 uprising. Many of them were the children and disciples of Shah Waliullah, Sayyid Ahmad, Shah Abdul Aziz, Shah Isma'il and Shari'at Ullah. After the failure of the 1857 uprising, Maulana Mahmud ul-Hasan (d. 1921) sought a *fatwa* from Makkah for *jihad* against the British. He was arrested on his way back from Makkah and imprisoned in Malta for many years. Again, Makkah and Hajj were the focus of the *jihad* movements against British colonialism in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

But the *jihad* activities were not peculiar to the Muslims of India alone nor was their emphasis on Makkah and Hajj for coordinating their activities, unique. Imam Shamwyl of the Caucasus and Amir Abdul Qadir and Muhammad ibn Ali Sanusi from Algeria, had also turned to Makkah and benefitted from the great assembly of the *Ummah* during Hajj.

In 1827 there blazed forth a *jihad* movement under the teachings of one Mullah Muhammad to fight the Czars in the Caucasus. Two theology students at Mullah Muhammad's seminary became very famous: Ghazi Muhammad and Shamwyl. In 1828, Shamwyl went for

Hajj where he met Amir Abdul Qadir from Algeria who was also in Makkah. The two future heroes of Islamic resistance planned their campaigns in Makkah at the time of Hajj — Abdul Qadir against the French in Algeria and Imam Shamwyl against the Czars in the Caucasus.[5]

The movement that Muhammad ibn Ali Sanusi led in North Africa actually originated in Makkah. The Sanusi order, as it came to be called, arose as a branch of the Idrisi order founded by Ahmad ibn Idris (d. 1837) who was from Morocco and was a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace.[6] Idris came to settle in Makkah and the *tariqa* that he established, *Tariqa Muhammadiya*, temporarily exercised political sway in the province of Asir. Out of this *tariqa* grew three other movements: the Rashidiya, the Amirghaniya and the Sanusiya. The Rashidiya remained confined to Algeria but the Amirghaniya and Sanusiya orders spread into other areas. The Amirghaniya's influence spread in the Sudan and Nubia while the Sanusiya made inroads into Equatorial Africa as well as in Libya and Egypt.

The Sanusiya order was founded by Muhammad ibn Ali al-Sanusi (d. 1859). He was from Algeria but settled in Makkah where he had become a disciple of Ahmad ibn Idris. The Sanusiya order was an activist movement. Although Sufic in origin, the movement laid great emphasis on martial training as well as encouraging its followers to involve themselves in agriculture and trade. It was the Sanusiya order that resisted French colonialism in Equatorial Africa. It also took up arms against the Italians in Libya and the British in Egypt.

All these movements had a number of common features: they all emerged at roughly the same period in history and each had its links with Hajj and Makkah. The period in which they emerged coincided with the onslaught of colonialism on the lands of Islam. While Muslim power was in decline even prior to that, Muslims had not faced such a concerted invasion from the forces of *kufr* to subjugate them and occupy their lands. The occupation of Jerusalem by the crusaders (1099 to 1187) was set aright by Salahuddin after he had dealt with the rulers of the States surrounding Palestine. These rulers had all connived with the crusaders in their petty rivalries with each other and had helped keep the Muslims in bondage. The other exception, of course, was the loss of Granada in 1492 to the Catholic kings. But the emergence of the Uthmaniyyah *khilafat* at the beginning of the

sixteenth century partly compensated for that loss.

When Muslims were confronted by the organized power of *kufr*, their spontaneous reaction was to launch a *jihad* movement against it. And in each case Hajj played a central role in their plans. It was so because Muslims have always understood Hajj to be political in nature. It is only in Hajj that the entire *Ummah* is represented in its microcosm. The Ka'aba, that simple cube, as the House of Allah, represents the permanance and stability of Islam. Muslims not only face the Ka'aba in their daily prayers but also instinctively turn to it to seek Allah's guidance and blessings in times of adversity. The *Ummah* has understood this historical role of the House of Allah (Bait Allah) as well as the role of Hajj as commanded by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* in the Qur'an and as exemplified by the life-example of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Much as the present occupiers of the Haramain may be averse to this wider role of Hajj, the Muslims have a duty to understand the true dimensions of Hajj and to restore it to its proper function as ordained by Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*.

The world of Islam is still faced with the organized power of *kufr*. Since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the forces of *kufr* have even given up the pretence of wishing to live in peace with Islam. The statements issued from such power centres of *kufr* as Washington, Moscow, Paris, London, Tel Aviv, New Delhi, etc., should leave no one in doubt about their real intentions. As at the time of the advent of colonialism, so today, the world of Islam needs to mobilize its resources to confront and defeat these evil forces. Allah's command in the Qur'an is absolutely explicit: 'He it is who has sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religions, however much the *mushrikeen* may be averse' (9:33, 61:9 The same command, in a slightly modified form, is also repeated in 48:28). Surely, this command cannot be realized when many regimes in the world of Islam are subservient to these very powers of *kufr*. In addition, if such regimes are also in control of the holy places of Islam, as the House of Saud is, then in reality Islam's holy places are under the control of *kufr* even if such control is exercised indirectly.

The assertion that there should be 'no politics in Hajj' is only a ploy used by the House of Saud to curtail certain types of ideas from spreading among the Muslims. Whenever it has suited them, the Saudi rulers have used Hajj to project their own version of politics. For

instance, until 1980, the Saudis used to organize an annual conference at each Hajj under the auspices of the Rabita al-Alam al-Islami. Naturally only those people were invited to the conference who subscribed to the Saudi point of view. Not much else, however, could be expected from a conference that was organized by a Saudi front organization based in Makkah. It is interesting to note that the conferences were abandoned in 1980, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in February 1979 and the urpising in the Haram in November 1979. That uprising shook the House of Saud to its very foundations.

The Saudis' hypocrisy is also evident from the fact that during Hajj in 1985, Yassir Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a completely secular organization, was invited to deliver the *khutbah* in Masjid Al-Ni'mra in Arafat. The day of Arafat (not to be confused with Yassir Arafat!) has been called the day of Hajj by the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Yet, the House of Saud chose a secular-nationalist like Yassir Arafat to deliver the *khutbah* to millions of Muslims assembled in the Wadi Arafat (Valley of Arafat) on that day. What did Arafat talk about? He spoke about the liberation of Palestine, of course, but within a secular, nationalist framework. So, according to the House of Saud, it is all right to talk about politics in a secular framework in Arafat on the day of Hajj but it is forbidden for Muslims to discuss these issues in an Islamic framework. That is why Muslims must not hold demonstrations to proclaim their dissociation from the *kuffar* and *mushrikeen* under the banner of Islam and according to the commandments of Allah *subhananhu wa ta'ala* as revealed in the Qur'an. If they do, the Saudi soldiers will be there to gun them down in cold blood.

Sanctity and security in the Haram

Hajj is the annual assembly of the *Ummah*. The *tawwaf* itself is a great demonstration as hundreds of thousands of Muslims circumambulate the Ka'aba reaffirming their rejection of any other authority except the One and only Authority, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. In fact, all the rituals of Hajj can be categorized as a demonstration of the *Ummah*. How else can one describe the *Sa'i*, the running between the hills of Safa and Marwa? If the gathering in the stark plain of Arafat under the towering Jabal ar-Rahmah (the mount of mercy) is not a demonstration, what else is it?

Hajj as one of the fundamental pillars of faith is ordained for all

Muslims at least once in a lifetime. Only those who do not have the means to undertake the journey are exempted. The Qur'an says: 'And proclaim unto mankind (*al-naas*) the Pilgrimage (Hajj). They will come unto you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine: that they may witness things that are of benefit to them, and mention the name of Allah on appointed days over the beast of cattle that He has bestowed upon them' (22:27-28). This proclamation is made within the context of making the sacred House a place of safety for those who visit it. Thus, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* says: 'Remember We made the House a place of assembly for people and a place of safety...' (2:125). In another verse the Qur'an says: 'Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca (Makkah), a blessed place, a guidance to the people' (3:96). The safety and security at the time of Hajj is of such importance and necessity that Allah, in His infinite Wisdom and Mercy, has extended it even to the birds and animals. Thus, there is a specific Qur'anic injunction against hunting (or hurting) birds or other animals during the pilgrimage: 'O you who believe! Kill no wild game while you are on the pilgrimage...' (5:95). And it is re-emphasized in the very next verse: 'To hunt on land is forbidden you so long as you are on the pilgrimage' (5:96).

In fact, the safety and security aspects at Hajj have been repeatedly stressed in the Qur'an. Again, in *Surah al-Mai'da*, Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* commands the believers: 'O you who believe! Profane not Allah's monuments nor the Sacred Month nor the offerings nor the garlands, nor those repairing to the Sacred House, seeking the grace and pleasure of Allah...' (5:2). The twin aspects of safety and security are repeatedly stressed because Hajj represents the unity and diversity of the *Ummah*. In order for the *Ummah* to realize the true manifestations of faith on its journey to spiritual life, a safe and secure environment is of paramount importance. Only then can the Muslims develop a sense of harmony out of the cultural, linguistic and geographical diversity of the *Ummah*. This harmony of thought will lead to the harmony of action which is the Qur'anic basis for establishing equity and justice on earth.

In the Prophetic mission of the thousands of Prophets, their first and foremost duty was to proclaim the Absolute Oneness of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. Any other authority was and is categorically and emphatically rejected. A natural consequence of this is that *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is the one sin that He does not forgive. Hajj, which is the Muslim's *hijra* (migration) from the affairs

of this world to the House of Allah (the Ka'aba), therefore, has to be undertaken in an environment where a clear and unambiguous declaration of dissociation from the *mushrikeen* is made. Allah's commands in the Qur'an leave absolutely no room for doubt on this score: 'And a proclamation from Allah and His messenger to all men on the day of the greater pilgrimage (Hajj) that Allah is free from obligations to the *mushrikeen* and (so is) His messenger...' (9:3).

This theme is continued even further when Allah commands that 'the *mushrikeen* only are unclean (*najs*). So let them not come near the Masjid al-Haram after this their year...' (9:28). The prohibition on the *mushrikeen* to enter the boundaries of Makkah has existed ever since. However, the House of Saud is in clear violation of this Qur'anic injunction too. The master plan of Makkah is contracted out to the department of Urban Planning at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon (US). While the department is headed by a Muslim from Egypt, the majority of his associates are non-Muslims, including an associate professor who is a well-known zionist. This zionist professor has made several trips to Saudi Arabia in the past few years. No doubt, he has been allowed into Makkah as an 'honorary Muslim'! The Saudis' utter disregard of the Qur'anic injunctions can also be found in their allowing American and British construction and consulting companies to operate, under a thinly-disguised 'Islamic' cover, in Makkah and Medina, including the Masjid al-Haram.

Since the House of Saud took control of the Haramain more than sixty years ago, it has awarded itself the title of 'Khadim ul-Haramain' (servants of the two holy places). This title of 'servant' is a recent adoption by the present king Fahd because of increasing criticism of his un-Islamic lifestyle — drinking, gambling, adultery, etc. — that has come to light and the resultant negative publicity surrounding it. In the past, successive Saudi kings have called themselves the 'guardians of the Haramain'. The Qur'an, again, is clear about who should tend the holy places: 'He only shall tend Allah's sanctuaries who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgement and observes proper worship and pays the *zakat* and fears none save Allah. For such (only) is it possible that they can be of the rightly guided' (9:18). Even if one were to concede that all Saudi kings, including the present one, have observed proper worship, paid the *zakat*, etc., they fall far short of the commandment of 'fearing none save Allah'.

The House of Saud has always relied on foreign mercenary soldiers for

protection: the Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Jordanians, Moroccans and now the Egyptians.[7] In fact, since the massacre in Makkah, large contingents of Egyptian and Moroccan troops have been hired by the House of Saud for protection.[8] The total subservience of the House of Saud to US and zionist interests — the two biggest enemies of Islam today — makes it absolutely unfit to be in control of the Haramain. The US and its surrogate, Israel, represent the forces of *kufr*. Both have publicly vowed to fight against any manifestations of Islam's re-emergence as a power on the world scene. In fact, the forces aligned against the Islamic movement worldwide — the US, Israel, Britain, France, the Soviet Union, India, China, etc., all representing the power of *kufr* — are leading their anti-Islamic crusade in conjunction with such regimes in the Muslim world as those in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Indonesia, etc. The House of Saud is in the forefront of this anti-Islamic campaign, both in using its financial resources as well as being totally subservient to US political, military and economic interests. The Qur'anic reprimand for such behaviour as displayed by the House of Saud is obvious: 'Say: Serve you in place of Allah that which possesses for you neither hurt nor use?' (5:76).

The Qur'an has also clearly prohibited Muslims from taking the Jews and Christians as protecting friends (5:51). It has further commanded the Muslims not to choose for friends 'those who received the Scripture before you and of the disbelievers (*kafirun*), as make a jest and sport of your religion' (5:57). Why? Because Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* says in the Qur'an: 'They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah (himself) said: O children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Lo! Whoso ascribes partners unto Allah, for him Allah has forbidden Paradise. His abode is the Fire. For evil-doers there will be no helpers. They surely disbelieve who say: Lo! Allah is the third of the three; when there is no God save the One God' (5:72-73).

From the above verses we can clearly understand that those who associate partners with Allah are committing *shirk* and hence are among the disbelievers. Most people today who call themselves Jews or Christians would fall into this category. They associate partners with Allah; they make fun of Allah's *din* (Islam), are rebellious against Allah's commands and are extremely antagonistic to Muslims. But this is to be expected as Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* Himself has warned the believers in the Qur'an: 'You will find the most vehement of mankind

in hostility to those who believe (to be) the Jews and the *mushrikeen*...' (5:82). Indeed, their hostility is not confined to the Muslims. They are also the enemies of Allah for refusing to believe in Him, spreading corruption on earth and associating partners with Him. That is why Allah says: 'O you who believe! Choose not My enemy and your enemy for friends...' (60:1).

Yet when we examine the record of the House of Saud, and especially under its current ruler, Fahd, we find that it is closely aligned with the forces of *kufr* and working for the enemies of Allah. Today, Islam and Muslims are routinely derided in the west's media. The occupant of the White House and his administration make no secret of their enmity towards those Muslims who wish to work for the glory of Islam and to make Allah's Word uppermost. But the self-styled 'guardians of the Haramain' find nothing wrong with this. Indeed, they work hard to project the American-approved version of Islam and attack and kill those Muslims who wish to see Hajj returned to its original state, as the annual assembly of the *Ummah* where all the problems can be discussed in an atmosphere free from coercion and fear.

Allah's rebuke to those who gloat over their title as 'guardians of the Haramain' is as applicable to the House of Saud today as it was to the Quraish at the time of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. The House of Saud also seeks much publicity from the fact that it provides free water to pilgrims at certain locations. They never mention that they charge exorbitant fees for many services which are not provided. The following Qur'anic verses apply to the behaviour of the House of Saud as much as they used to apply to the Qur'aish who took pride in providing water to the pilgrims but refused to abandon their ways of *shirk*: 'Count you the slaking of a pilgrim's thirst and tendance of the Masjid al-Haram as (equal to the worth of him) who believes in Allah and the Last Day, and strives in the way of Allah (*jihad fi Sabilillah*)? They are not equal in the sight of Allah. Allah guides not wrongdoing (*dhalimin*) folk. Those who believe and have left their homes and striven with their wealth and their lives in Allah's way are of much greater worth in Allah's sight...' (9:19-20). Thus, while the Saudis and their network of apologists worldwide use the control of the Haramain to confer legitimacy upon the House of Saud, Allah's verdict is very different.

The manner in which the House of Saud perpetrated the massacre of the *hujjaj* in Makkah was a deliberate act of sacrilege. By so doing,

they have not only destroyed the environment of safety for the *hujjaj* but also desecrated the sanctity of the Haram. Both the security and sanctity are Qur'anic commandments. Will the House of Saud get away with this too as they have got away with other acts of desecration and destruction of holy sites in Makkah and Medina in the past? Perhaps the *Ummah* bears some responsibility for the crime perpetrated by the House of Saud during the last Hajj. If Muslims had challenged Saudi control over the Haramain and confronted them over the desecration of historical sites as well as the attack on the Masjid al-Haram in November-December 1979 (see next chapter), it is quite possible that the House of Saud would not have had the courage to perpetrate such a crime. The acts and policies of the House of Saud are an open challenge to the *Ummah*. Unless action is taken to wrest control of the Haramain from them, there is a grave danger that like the Masjid al-Aqsa, Muslims might lose direct physical control over the two holiest places of Islam as well.

Notes

1: Khan, Majid Ali. *The Pious Caliphs*, Islamic Book Publishers, Kuwait, 1982. p.69.

2: Zafarul-Islam Khan & Yaqub Zaki (eds). *Hajj in Focus*, The Open Press, Toronto, London, 1986. pp.77-79.

3: Fazlur Rahman. *Islam*, A Doubleday Anchor Book, New York, 1968. pp.25-251. A more colourful account is given, in Urdu, by Abad Shahpuri, *Syed Badshah ka qafila* (The Great Syed's Caravan), Maktab-e Zikra, Rampur, India, 1986.

4: *Ibid.*, p.251.

5: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 8, Toronto, July 1-15, 1987.

6: Fazlur Rahman*Islam*, A Doubleday Anchor Book, New York, 1968. pp.254-257.

7: The *Independent*. London, December 12, 1987 & January 2, 1988.

8: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 14, Toronto, October 1-15, 1987.

Acts of desecration in the Haram

Throughout history Muslims have paid great attention to upholding the sanctity of the Haram and maintaining the security of the *hujjaj*. Since this is a Qur'anic injunction, Muslims have no choice in this matter. The second *khalifah* 'Umar ibn al-Khattab used to maintain two residences in Makkah at the time of Hajj: one within the boundaries of the Haram-e Makkah and the other outside it. This was done in order not to violate the sanctity of the Haram if any person was to be punished for misconduct. Imam Husain's journey out of Makkah in late 680 was motivated by the same concern for the sanctity of the Haram. While he put his own life and the lives of members of his family as well as close companions at great risk and offered the supreme sacrifice at Karbala in 681, he did not give Yazid or his henchmen the opportunity to desecrate the Haram's sanctity.

Not that Yazid had any concern for the sanctity of the Haram. In August 683 he dispatched an army under the command of his one-eyed general, Muslim ibn 'Uqbah, to crush Abdullah ibn Zubayr, the grandson of the first *khalifah*, Abu Bakr, who had refused to accept Yazid's accession to '*khilafat*' and had proclaimed himself *khalifah* in Medina.[1] The Yazidi army, including many Syrian Christians, ransacked and pillaged the Prophet's city for three days. Then the soldiers turned towards Makkah where Abdullah ibn Zubayr had taken refuge. On the way Muslim ibn 'Uqbah died and was replaced by one Husain ibn Numayr al-Sakuni.[2] His army proceeded to the Haram and started to catapult stones inside the Masjid al-Haram. In the brutal assault, the Black Stone (Hajr-e Aswad) was split in three pieces.[3] Ibn Numayr, however, suspended the assault upon the death of Yazid in November 683, and hurried back to Damascus for fear that a war of succession may break out there. Ibn Zubayr rebuilt the

Ka'aba in the following year and was proclaimed *khalifah* not only in the Hijaz but also in Iraq, South Arabia, Egypt and even parts of Syria. However, his *khilafat* proved short-lived once the Umayyads sorted out their accession problems. Beginning in March 692, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan's general Hajjaj laid siege to Makkah again. Ibn Zubayr valiantly resisted the Umayyad attackers for nearly seven months but was finally defeated and killed.[4] Thus, the Umayyads, under Yazid and his immediate successors had the dubious distinction of becoming the first to violate the sanctity of the Haram and causing bloodshed in its precincts, twice.

The second group to have violated the sanctity of the Haram was the Qaramatians or Qaramita. Named after its founder, Hamdan Qarmat, this group emerged in Kufa, Iraq at the end of the nineth century. The Qaramatians are considered by many Muslim writers as the 'Bolsheviks of Islam',[5] and outside the pale of Islam. They caused a great deal of bloodshed in Muslim lands, especially in southern Iraq and the western parts of Persia. Under the leadership of Abu-Tahir Sulaiman, the Qaramatians attacked Makkah and in 930, after much slaughter and pillage, destroyed the Ka'aba by carrying off the Black Stone to Bahrain.[6] It was returned, twenty years later by the order of the Fatimid *khalifah* al-Mansur.

These early acts of desecration have only been matched by those of the House of Saud, both when their hordes first erupted from Dar'iyyah at the beginning of the nineteenth century and when they occupied Makkah in 1924 (see p.40). Throughout the years that the Saudis have been in control of the Hijaz, a systematic policy of destruction of the historical sites of Islam has been underway. While they carry out this destruction under the pretext of not allowing any *bid'ah* (innovations in religion; since they allegedly consider any importance given to such sites as *bid'ah*), the Saudis have preserved many relics of the House of Saud. For instance, the Mismak fortress in Riyadh or the tip of Abdullah ibn Jaluwi's spear stuck in the fortress door, are carefully preserved. So is the ancient capital of Dar'iyyah. Yet, Islam's monuments starting from the Prophet's and his beloved daughter Fatima's or Abu Bakr's houses in Makkah have all been wiped out. In Medina the cemeteries of Jannat-ul Baqi' as well as the cemetery at Uhud suffer from terrible neglect. The house of Ayoub Ansari, where the Prophet's camel, Qaswa, had stopped after the migration from Makkah to Medina, has also disappeared.

But the incident that revealed the true nature of the House of Saud and

the extent to which its members would go to preserve their own power, was the manner in which they dealt with the Haram uprising in November 1979. The children and grand-children of the Ikhwan had now come of age (the grand-parents having been slaughtered in 1929). They watched with horror the complete secularization of their society as well as the brazen corruption and lewdness of most members of the House of Saud. A simultaneous uprising, led by Juhaiman al-Otayba, in Medina and Makkah was foiled when news of the planned revolt broke out. In Makkah, Juhaiman and his companions sought refuge inside the Masjid al-Haram, hoping that the House of Saud, with all its corruption, would not dare to attack the most holiest sanctuary of Islam. How mistaken they were when the Saudis obtained a *fatwa* from their court *ulama* to attack the Haram. Mercenaries from Morocco, Jordan *and* France were brought in to carry out the most gruesome slaughter inside Islam's holiest sanctuary. The Saudis also started a massive propaganda campaign to discredit those who had sought refugee inside the Haram.[7] The fact that Juhaiman and his companions had gone inside with their families — wives and children — clearly indicated their peaceful intentions. The Saudis attacked with guns, mortars, buzookas, artillery and tear gas shells, without any regard for the sanctity of the Haram. When Juhaiman and his group went into the cellars of the Haram to escape the gunfire, the Saudis flooded them with water and sent electric current through it. The Saudi assault continued for more than twenty days until all the people were either killed inside the Haram or arrested. The *tawwaf* stopped around the House of Allah while the Saudis carried out their slaughter. For several weeks afterwards, the Haram remained closed while the Saudis hurriedly tried to repair the damage to the minarets and arches inside in order to cover up their crime from the rest of the *Ummah*.[8] It is interesting to note that the *tawwaf* around the House of Allah was stopped previously only during the assault by the Yazidi army, the Hajjaj attack and the desecration of the Ka'aba by the Qaramita. The Saudis have joined the company of the corrupters, the tyrants and the *mushrikeen* in violating the sanctity of Islam's holiest shrine.

It would not be too far-fetched to surmise that since the House of Saud got away with the assault on the Haram in November-December 1979, it was to be expected that they would not hesitate to repeat a similar or more hideous crime again. Since the 1979 Haram incident, the Saudi soldiers also started to carry guns inside the precincts of the Haram-e Makkah. Is the carrying of guns within the holy precincts of the Haram sanctioned by the Qur'an or the *sunnah* of the Prophet? Sooner

or later, the Saudi soldiers were bound to use these weapons. They did, on July 31 by slaughtering hundreds of *hujjaj* in cold blood and in utter disregard of the commands of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. This one also stood out for its magnitude and utter cruelty from all the previous incidents. For the first time in the history of Hajj or the Haram, the attack was perpetrated by massively armed soldiers on completely unarmed and innocent pilgrims. Never before had such a slaughter been carrried out on the *hujjaj* in the Haram. In all previous conflicts, either armies fought each other or, as in the case of the 1979 uprising by the Juhaiman group, they were at least armed even if they were accompanied by women and children. But the *hujjaj* participating in the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen* march last July were totally unarmed and had no intention of fighting the Saudi soldiers or anyone else.

The Saudi regime has shown no remorse for the grievous crime it perpetrated by violating the sanctity of the Haram and shedding the blood of innocent pilgrims. Its officials have continued to level accusations against Iran. In fact, only a few days after the Makkah massacre, those Saudi military personnel who were involved in the slaughter were honoured in a special ceremony presided over by king Fahd himself. They were awarded medals for bravery. In the awards ceremony Fahd openly admitted that whatever happened in Makkah was carried out with his full permission and in complete knoweldge of the council of ministers. This was an important admission on two counts: that the massacre was not a spontaneous affair but was pre-planned, and, that the House of Saud did not have any regard for the sanctity of the Haram.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Makkah massacre has raised questions about the future of the Haramain and who should administer them. While informed opinion in the *Ummah* has never accepted Saudi control over the Haramain, the slaughter perpetrated by their armed soldiers last July has added a note of urgency to this debate.

Notes

1: Hitti, Philip K. *History of the Arabs*, 10th edition, The MacMillan Press, London, 1970. p.191.

2: Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-. *Tarikh al-Muluk wal Rusul*, Vol. I, ed. de

Goeje, Leyden, 1881-2. p.2220. Also, Ya'qubi, al-. *Ta'rikh*, Vol. ii, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, Leyden, 1883. p.299.

3. Tabari, al-. *Tarikh al-Muluk wal Rusul*, Vol. II, Leyden. p.427. Also Fakihi, al-. *Al-Muntaqa fi Akhbar*, Umm al-Qura, ed. F. Wustenfeld, Leipzig, 1859. p.18.

4: Dinawari, al-. *al-Akhbar al-Tawil*, ed. V. Guirgess, Leyden, 1888. p.320. Tabari, al-. *Tarikh*, Vol. ii. pp.845-8.

5: Fazlur Rahman. *Islam*, Anchor Books, New York, 1968. p.214.

6: Miskawayh. *Tajarib al-Umam* Vol. i, ed. H F Amedroz, Oxford, 1920. p.201. Athir, ibn al. *al-Kamil fi al-Ta'rikh*, Vol. viii, ed. C.J. Tornberg, Leyden, 1867. pp.153-4.

7: Lacey, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia & the House of Sa'ud*, Avon Books, New York, 1981. pp.478-87. Lacey himself has given a garbled version of events. For an accurate understanding of the background to this uprising see Kalim Siddiqui (ed). *Issues in the Islamic Movement: 1980-81*. pp.363-367.

8: During the last Hajj, the writer witnessed that repair work was still going on in the cellars. These are now closed to the ordinary pilgrims. They are used, instead, by Saudi security forces, according to one source working in the Haram.

The future of the Haramain

Muslims have been concerned about the administration of the Haramain ever since the House of Saud took control in 1924[1]. This concern is based on the understanding that the Haramain are a common heritage of the *Ummah*. Control over them, therefore, cannot be exercised by a single family but must pass over to a body reflecting the collective will of the *Ummah*. A single family, whatever its political orientation, operating within the nation-States framework cannot monopolize this control. The nation-States framework, in any case, is designed to make permanent the division of the *Ummah*, whereas the objective of Hajj is to unite the Muslims. Since the Makkah massacre, the debate about the future of the Haramain has further intensified. In fact, the massacre, far from putting an end to the Iranian-organized demonstrations at the time of Hajj, has focused attention on the question of the control and future of the Haramain more sharply.

In his first statement immediately after the massacre of the *hujjaj*, Imam Khomeini put the issue in its proper perspective when he said: 'The House of Saud is not worthy of administering the Ka'aba and Hajj affairs. Thus, the *ulama*, intellectuals and revolutionary Muslims must find a way out of this situation. The Irani pilgrims have conveyed their message of revolution and antipathy towards the *mushrikeen* with their blood'.[2] He was addressing senior government officials who had called on him at his residence after the Imam received the message of Hujjatul-Islam Karrubi from Makkah. Quoting the Qur'anic verse: 'Count ye the slaking of a pilgrim's thirst and tending to the holy sanctuary as (equal to the worth of him) who believes in Allah and the Last Day and striving in the way of Allah? They are not equal in the sight of Allah; And Allah does not guide the unjust' (9:19), the Imam

chastized the Saudi rulers for presenting themselves as 'servants' of the holy places. He also took them to task for trying to present themselves as somehow better Muslims for providing water to the pilgrims and tending to the holy sanctuaries. The Imam said that Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* Himself has placed those who struggle in His way with their lives and blood, on a much higher plane.

'It is interesting to note,' said the Imam, that 'Allah has specifically mentioned two conditions: faith in Allah and the Day of Judgement and striving in Allah's way against His enemies and those of humanity, from among all the other Islamic values. Allah has, therefore, instructed us through this selection that *jihad* is valued far above all the other values.[3]

'By concluding the above verse (9:19) with the warning "Allah does not guide the unjust", is Allah not telling us that the Saudis of today and their likes throughout history have been nothing but tyrants who do not possess the capacity to be guided? Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* Himself has categorically stated that He does not guide such people'.[4]

The Imam, though deeply distressed by the spilling of innocent Muslims' blood and the loss of hundreds of lives at the hands of the Saudis, said that by perpetrating this crime, the Saudis had exposed themselves. 'If we wanted to expose the puppets of the United States in the Muslim world) and had tried to prove that there was no lifference between Reza Shah, Saddam or the House of Saud in ttempting to destroy Islam and opposing the teachings of the Qur'an, it would have been an enormous task for us. If we wished to prove that they are all servants of the United States and have an assignment to destroy the mosques (as centres of Islamic activity), it would not have been possible for us to do so as effectively as the House of Saud has done through its own action'.[5]

The Imam went on to proclaim that the House of Saud was unworthy of calling itself the 'guardian' of the Haramain or being host to the *hujjaj*. As servants of the United States and Israel, the House of Saud cannot but work against the interests of Islam to safeguard US-zionist interests. Indeed, by their disgraceful behaviour, the Al-e Saud have even put to shame the misdeeds of the likes of Abu Sufyan, Abu Lahab and Yazid. The Imam was quite categorical in stating that the holy sanctuaries of Makkah and Medina cannot be left in the hands of such people.

At least two major conferences as well as a number of smaller conferences have been held in many parts of the world since the massacre. The first in Tehran from November 23 to 27, 1987, attracted several hundred guests from more than 43 countries.[6] Among the participants from overseas were such eminent Islamic scholars and thinkers as Shaikh Sa'eed Sha'ban, Shaikh Muhammad Husain Fadhlallah and Shaikh Maher Hamoud (Lebanon); Shaikh Ali Zein el-Abidin and Shaikh Muhammad Mehdi al-Tayyib (Sudan): Dr Kalim Siddiqui (UK); Shaikh Muhammad Sa'em (Turkey); Dr Abdulfattah Abdulmoneim al-Sabrouti (Egypt) and Imam Muhammad al-Asi (US). From the Islamic Republic, President Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Majlis speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani, Prime Minister Husain Musavi, head of Iran's Hajj Mission Hujjatul-Islam Mahdi Karrubi and minister of Islamic Guidance Dr Muhammad Khatami addressed the conference. A number of eyewitnesses who were in Makkah also narrated their personal observations of the massacre. In fact, Shaikh Sa'eed Sha'ban, Shaikh Fadhlallah and Shaikh Muhammad Sa'em were in Makkah for last Hajj when the Saudi forces carried out the massacre. Shaikh Sa'em himself sustained injuries in the Saudi assault and he shared his observations with the conference participants.

The four-day conference adopted a number of resolutions dealing with the issue of Hajj, demonstrations to proclaim the dissociation of the believers from the *mushrikeen* during the pilgrimage season, sanctity and security of the Haram and administration of the Haramain. There was little doubt in the minds of the participants, who represented all schools of thought in Islam, that the House of Saud was unfit to administer the Haramain. The conference declared that the Haramain must be administered by a body of combatant *ulama* not subservient to any regime or earthly power but dedicated to upholding the banner of Islam.

Six weeks later another conference in London, England, organized by the Muslim Institute from January 6 to 9, 1988, addressed the question of the Future of the Haramain.[7] In his inaugural address Dr Kalim Siddiqui, director of the Muslim Institute, tried to separate the issue of the Makkah massacre from the future of the Haramain. But the massacre, nevertheless, remained on everyone's mind. Dr Siddiqui's contention was that even if the Saudis allow the Iranians to hold such demonstrations in Makkah and Medina and even if the Saudis apologize for last year's slaughter, the future of the Haramain still had to be discussed and resolved. His central argument was that since the

Haramain are a common heritage of the *Ummah*, control over them cannot be exercised by any single nation-State or even a collectivity of them. Whether the system of government in that nation-State was monarchical, democratic, dictatorial or any other type, is irrelevant. Only an Islamic State can exercise control over the Haramain. This is exactly the *sunnah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, as well. Indeed, the Qur'an too, has expressly stated (9:18) that only those shall tend to Allah's sanctuaries who believe in Allah, the Day of Judgement, establish worship, pay the *zakat* and fear none save Allah. The House of Saud clearly falls far short of most of these requirements.

Among the other speakers at the London seminar were Shaikh Ahmed Toure', Dr Fehmi Shinnawi, Shaikh Ibrahim Alawneh, Ustad Hadi Awang, Maulana Sulaiman Tahir, Shaikh Abubakr Tureta, Shaikh Maher Hamoud, Shaikh Abdullah Hallack, Maulana M Hasan al-Azhari, Dr Yusuf Amin, Dr Taqi Bangash, Imam Muhammad al-Asi, Imam Abdul Alim Musa, Dr Hasan di-Tiro, Dr Ahmed Muhammad Kani and Imam Yasin Abu Bakr. There were many other presentations, both from the platform as well as the floor.

At the conclusion of the seminar, the following resolutions were presented:

The Haramain and the Seerah and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad

This seminar reiterates the view widely held in the *Ummah* that the Haramain are the shared heritage of all Muslims whose legal right it is to observe Hajj rituals and benefits in security and peace. As such, the Haramain cannot form part of a modern State, whether nationalist, dynastic, racist, dictatorial or democratic. The Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, built the first Islamic State in history in the Haramain. Thus, following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace, the Haramain should be restored to their original condition, as component parts of an Islamic State.

'This seminar reminds the *Ummah* to bear in mind that from the beginning the creators of the Saudi dynastic throne were motivated by desire for territorial control at the expense and, ultimately, the ruin of the Uthmaniyyah *khilafat*. During the earlier part of this century, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud became a British ally and worked for the destabilization of the *khilafat*. Al-Saud's meteoric rise to power in Jazirat al-Arab was part of the British plan for the area. The defeat of the Uthmaniyyah *khilafat* in the First World War paved the way for

the emergence of Arab States predicated on the basis of regional nationalism. The British decided who should be the rulers. It is significant that Ibn Saud invaded Makkah only four days after Sharif Husain had claimed the *khilafat*, because the colonial powers had resolved to abolish it. The House of Saud owe their State and throne to the colonialists. Thus the colonial powers allowed them to expand their hold over the Arabian Peninsula and the Haramain ash-Sharifain under the trusteeship and protection of the great European powers. In recent times, this role of trusteeship and protection has moved to the US. In return, the Saudi regime has become the extended arm of the US in the heartlands of the Muslim world. The total subservience of the House of Saud to the US does not require proof. The discussions at this seminar clarify that a system, subservient to the US to this degree, and indirectly to zionism, cannot be left in control of the Haramain. We must learn a lesson from the loss of Jerusalem. It was possible for Israel, supported by the US, to seize Jerusalem only because the defence of the Holy City had been left to Arab reactionary forces, themselves a creation of the British.

'This seminar condemns the horrendous crimes committed by the Saudi regime and clarifies that it is collaborating with and geared to the needs of the US campaign aimed at overthrowing the Islamic Republic of Iran. This was manifestly so in the massacre of hundreds of *hujjaj*, Iranians and non-Iranians, by Saudi security forces on 6 Dhu al-Hijjah 1407 (July 31, 1987). This episode, and the Saudi propaganda campaign that followed, were clearly designed to isolate Iran from world Muslim public opinion and timed to divert attention from the imperialist naval build-up in the Persian Gulf.

The Haramain under Saudi rule

'It is clear that the Hijaz as a whole, and the cities of Makkah and Medina in particular, have suffered grave damage to their Islamic character. The Saudi regime, soon after it took over control of the Haramain, set about destroying some of the most sacred shrines of Islam, guided by their alleged Wahhabi views. However, the subsequent development of the cities of Makkah and Medina has demonstrated that the Saudi purpose has all along been to secularize the character, architecture and life of the two Holy Cities of Islam.

'This is in keeping with the Saudi view of Islam. The Saudi kingdom has emerged and flourished during the political defeat and disintegration of *Dar al-Islam*. As such, the Saudis regard any revival in

the political fortunes of Islam as a threat to them. The Saudis know that their survival depends on the continuation of western domination over the lands and peoples of Islam. To secure this goal, the Saudis promoted a ritualistic copy of Islam designed to keep politics out of religion. This is also the western view of Islam, and the west also realizes that, should political power return to Islam, western hegemony over the greater part of the world would be at an end.

'Thus it is in the common interest of the western protectorate, known as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and its western backers to prevent the emergence of Islam in its political role at all costs. It is this community of interests and mutual fear of Islam that drive the Saudi rulers and the western powers into a common campaign against Islam, the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic State and the Islamic movement all over the world. It is this fear of Islam that compels the Saudis to take barbaric action against those *hujjaj*, Iranian or others, who have chosen to proclaim their *bara'at* (severance of relations) from the *mushrikeen* and to demonstrate in support of Islamic unity, while condemning the enemies of Islam, specially America, Israel and Russia. The Hajj is an ideal annual occasion for the *Ummah* to declare *bara'at* from the known enemies of Islam.

What needs to be done?

'This seminar makes the following recommendations:

1. That a group of *ulama* should be invited to undertake lecture tours in all parts of the world to explain to the *Ummah* the seriousness of the threat to the Haramain under Saudi control.

2. That regional and local conferences should be arranged in all parts of the world to raise the level of awareness among the *Ummah* on the issue of the future of the Haramain. Fresh research should be commissioned so that books can be written on the causes leading up to the present situation.

3. That a commission comprising *ulama*, historians and architects be set up to research, survey and compile data on the destruction of Islamic shrines by the Saudi regime and how these can be restored when the Haramain are eventually liberated from Saudi control. In the meantime, photographs, plans and measured drawings of lost shrines should be collected and published. The commission should also keep under review new Saudi plans for 'development' in the Hijaz and the

Haramain affecting their Islamic nature, role and character.

This seminar also proposes the setting up of a committee to follow up the recommendations of this conference and of other conferences on this subject. The committee should consist of representatives of the Islamic movement in different parts of the world and should publish its reports annually.

4. Political and administrative control over the Haramain will eventually be exercised by the Islamic State that shall emerge there in due course. Pending this, a World Commission for the Haramain, consisting of *muttaqi ulama*, should be created with a permanent secretariat to oversee the affairs of the Haramain and Hajj. Members of the Commission should visit the Haramain frequently, specially during Hajj, accompanied by teams of experts. They should publish their reports and recommendations annually.

5. The seminar supports the line of Islamic *jihad* all over the world, specially in Palestine, Afghanistan, Lebanon, etc., because *jihad*, which inevitably involves *Shahada*, stands highest in the scale of Islamic virtues.

6. The seminar calls upon the Muslim *Ummah* to clear the obstacles that hinder *hujjaj* from accomplishing their aims, like demonstrating *bara'at* (severence of relations) from the *mushrikeen* and calling for Islamic unity, so that the Hajj achieves all its meanings, taking care of Muslims' affairs and solving their problems, so that Muslims can perform their rituals in security and peace; as Allah has said, 'so that they witness benefits for them' (Hajj:28).

7. In the view of this seminar, calling the Arabian Peninsula as 'Saudi Arabia' after the ruling dynasty is against Islam because the Prophet, upon whom be peace, referred to it as the Arabian Peninsula in his *hadith*: 'No two religions should exist in the Arabian Peninsula'.

8. This seminar calls upon Muslims all over the world to make the day of the Haram massacre (6 Dhu al-Hijjah 1407) as the day to declare *bara'at* (severance of relations) from the *mushrikeen*, every year.

9. This seminar considers Imam Khomeini to represent the application of true Islam, and eschews the views expressed by some court *ulama*. It advises them to fear Allah and not to sell their *akhirah* for this world at a small price.

10. Allah has said that 'Allah made the Ka'aba, the Sacred House, a (means of) sustaining for the people' (5:97). Hajj is a pillar of Islam and Allah has enjoined every able Muslim to perform it. It is not permissible, therefore, for a ruler to stop the guests of Allah from performing their obligation.

Conclusion

'In conclusion, we stress the point repeatedly made at this seminar that ultimately political vigour and health will return to all parts of the *Ummah* through a global Islamic movement that sets out to remove the legacy of nationalism, colonialism and subservience forever'.

The *Ummah's* concern for the future of the Haramain is natural because it is based on sound Islamic principles. The state of Hajj at any particular time reflects the state of the *Ummah*. Not only are the Haramain not safe from the evil designs of the *kuffar*[9] but the House of Saud is also not capable of defending the holy places. Indeed, it is not capable of defending even its own power structure. It has to hire foreign mercenary forces for its defence.[10] The House of Saud is also completely subservient to the US, thus curtailing its independent judgement. Even if all these concerns were somehow satisfied, the fundamental issue of control of the Haramain is still the concern of the *Ummah* and must be addressed.

An additional problem is the manner in which the House of Saud decides, quite arbitrarily, who should or should not be issued a visa for Hajj. The question of getting a visa for Hajj is, in itself, an innovation (*bid'ah*) and not sanctioned by the Qur'an or the *sunnah* of the Prophet, upon whom be peace. Allah's commandment about Hajj is clear: 'And proclaim unto mankind the Hajj. They will come unto thee on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every deep ravine' (22:27). Not only is there no stipulation that there should be a visa required for anyone to go for Hajj but the Saudis have, at times, actually refused visas to some Muslims despite claiming to do otherwise.[11] By so doing, they have prevented Muslims from fulfilling one of the fundamental obligations of Islam.

While the House of Saud is entitled to follow a particular line of approach to the understanding of Islam and the Qur'an, it has no right to impose such a line on others. In fact, the rest of the world of Islam does not share the narrow, sectarian interpretation of Islam as

advanced by the House of Saud. The administration of the Haramain and the conduct of Hajj have, however, consistently fallen prey to Saudi machinations. One of the saddest aspects is the manner in which the day of Hajj itself is arbitrarily chosen by the Saudis. They have periodically manipulated the date of Hajj in complete violation of Allah's commandments and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. For years, Muslims have had to observe the day of Hajj a day earlier because of the antics of the House of Saud. Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* has fixed the time and date for every occasion according to the lunar calendar. And the Prophet's *sunnah* has shown how this is to be practised. Yet, the Saudis have consistently violated these rules, thus depriving millions of Muslims from the *barakah* of Hajj.[12] Just as Juma' prayers cannot be performed on any other day of the week except Friday, so the Hajj must be observed on its proper day. Without following the correct criterion for moonsighting and, therefore, choosing the wrong day, Muslims are denied the *barakah* of Hajj because of the manipulation of the controlling authority of the Haramain. Muslims cannot absolve themselves of this responsibility by proclaiming their inability to do anything to rectify the situation. It is the duty of every Muslim to participate in the issue to bring it back to its Islamic basis.

The future of the Haramain and the question of how Hajj is to be conducted are of concern to all Muslims. The massacre in Makkah on July 31, 1987 has simply sharpened focus on these crucial questions. On the outcome of this debate will depend not only the future of Hajj and the Haramain but also the future of the *Ummah*.

Notes

1: See, for instance, the summary and recommendations of the International Hajj Seminar in London, August 1982 in Ghayasuddin, M. *Hajj — a ritual or the heart of the Islamic movement*, The Open Press, Toronto, London, 1983. Hajj conferences have since been held annually in Toronto (1983 to 1987), Sierra Leone (1983,1984), Dhaka (1983), Los Angeles (1983, 1987) and a number of other cities throughout the world.

2: *Imam Khomeini's messages to the Hajj pilgrims*, published by the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations,New York, 1987; p.42.

3: *Ibid.*, p.41.

4: *Ibid.*, p.41.

5: *Ibid.*, p.39.

6: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), November 23, 1987. *Tehran Times*, November 24 to 27, 1987.

7: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 21, Toronto, January 16-31, 1988; Vol. 16, No. 22, February 1-15, 1988 and Vol. 16, No. 23, February 16-29, 1988.

8: *Muslimedia*, February 1988. Also reproduced in *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 23, Toronto, February 16-29, 1988.

9: Ghayasuddin, M. *Hajj — a ritual or the heart of the Islamic movement*, The Open Press, Toronto, London, 1983. p.56.

10: *Crescent International*, Vol. 16, No. 14, Toronto, October 1-15, 1987; *Financial Times*, London, December 4, 1987; *The Independent*, London, December 29, 1987. While Egypt and Saudi Arabia did not have normal diplomatic relations (they were severed following Egypt's Camp David treaty with Israel in March 1979), Egyptian interior minister Zaki Badr personally led a contingent of Egyptian troops trained in riot control to Saudi Arabia at the end of August. Relations between the two were restored after the Arab League summit in Amman, Jordan from November 8 to 11, 1987. Saudi Arabia has since hired mercenaries from Morocco, Jordan and Bangladesh. A 20,000-strong contingent of Pakistani troops, which served in Saudi Arabia for more than a decade, returned home at the end of 1987 because Pakistan refused to allow these troops to be used against Iran in the Iran-Iraq war.

11: The Saudis have repeatedly claimed (see for instance *Saudi Arabia*, September 1987, Washington, DC) that they have not refused visas to any Muslim wishing to go for pilgrimage. In 1985 and 1986, they refused to issue a visa to Imam Muhammad al-Asi from Washington, DC. He was told quite explicitly by officials in the Saudi embassy in Washington, DC that they had instructions from the ministry of the interior not to issue him a visa for Hajj. Imam Asi leads Friday prayers for the Muslim community on the pavement outside the Washington Islamic Center. This Center is controlled by Saudi agents and some Muslims are barred entry by armed guards hired by these agents. Another Muslim, Hussain P Taylor, who embraced Islam in 1986, was refused a Hajj visa in 1987. His application was made at the same time as the author. At the time of going to press (April 1988), the Saudis have not issued visas to Iran's advance party to go to Makkah and Medina to reserve accommodation for the *hujjaj*. At the Organization of the Islamic Conference meeting in Amman, Jordan (March 21-25, 1988), the Saudis said that the total number of Iranian pilgrims must be reduced to one-third of their last year's strength of 150,000 (see *The Toronto Star*, April 5, 1988). Privately, the Saudis have told Iran that they could bring 200,000 *hujjaj* provided they agreed not to participate in the *Bara'at al-Mushrikeen* march. The Iranians have so far refused to accede to this Saudi demand. On April 21, 1988, the Saudi minister of Hajj and Awqaf, Abdul Wahhab Abdul Was'a, announced that only 45,000 *hujjaj* will be allowed from Iran this year. But, if they insisted on holding demonstrations, as stated by Imam Khomeini in a speech on April 11, then no Iranians will be allowed to perform the Hajj. On April 26, the Saudi government announced that it was breaking off diplomatic relations with Iran.

12: See the reports by the 'Committee for Crescent Observation', Ithaca, NY, July 1983, January 1988. Statistics compiled for Saudi announcements for moonsighting show that they have consistently referred to the birth of the new moon as a 'sighting'. A sighting does not occur until at least 20 to 26 hours after the birth of the new moon.

Eyewitness Accounts

Eyewitness No. 1

Rahif Khodary

I was fairly close to the front of the procession as it started from Al-Mo'abdah Square. Slogans against the US, Russia and Israel were being chanted rhythmically and directed through loudspeakers. It was very hot but the atmosphere was comforting. The participants were in a good mood. The procession moved in an orderly manner down al-Haram Street towards the agreed-upon dispersal point some half-a-kilometre down the street.

We had hardly moved about 10 to 15 minutes when I noticed Saudi troops pouring out of trucks and taking positions on the street. They cut a line straight across the street, three to four deep, blocking the path of the procession. There were also a lot of them in civilian clothes behind the troops. I was about 50 metres back from the front of the procession.

As the path of the procession was blocked by Saudi troops, arguments developed with the march organizers in front. It was becoming obvious that the Saudis were not going to let the procession through despite pleas by the Iranis that everything had been agreed upon and that the procession must proceed. As tempers flared, suddenly a barrage of stones started from the 'civilians' gathered behind the troops. They were throwing stones, cans and sticks at the procession. The Saudi troops also rushed the crowd and started to attack the procession with sticks. This two-pronged attack was totally unexpected. While hundreds of 'civilians' were throwing stones, uniformed Saudi troops were attacking pilgrims with sticks. The organizers of the

march did not know what to do with this most unpleasant turn of events. The attack then expanded. From a nearby building, big blocks of concrete started to fall on the procession. In this building, the Saudis had installed two video cameras to record the whole procession. As the concrete blocks came crashing down, people started to scream as they were hit. The blocks were very large and several people — both men and women — were injured or killed by them.

As the troops charged into the procession, people started to run for safety. Many were pushed into dead-end alleys; others tried to seek refuge in houses. A few other brothers and myself ran over to a neighbouring street that runs parallel to al-Haram Street. We then turned north. We had not gone very far when we heard shooting. The sound of guns and machine guns mixed with screams was horrifying. Even though we wanted to see what was going on, the sound of gunfire discouraged us from going back to the area of the attack. After we had moved quite a long distance north and we assumed that it would be safe there, we turned into an alley leading us back to al-Haram Street.

The scene at al-Haram Street was unimaginable. The shooting was still going on. There were scores of bodies on the street, lying in blood. Shoes, water bottles, clothes, banners and *chadors* littered the place. There were women crying and men groaning with pain. Some were on the ground, others were being helped to safety. A number of helicopters were also hovering overhead. After a few minutes, the shooting suddenly stopped. I looked around and saw that all the Iranis had sat on the ground with hands on their heads, as if indicating surrender. There was an eerie silence, pierced only by the sirens of ambulances and the wails of wounded or grief-stricken women.

Everywhere I looked there were bodies in the street. In an area about 200 square metres, I counted at least 140 bodies. I could see another hundred or so bodies ahead of me. There were more bodies beyond that but I could not count anymore. It was a horrible sight. When the ambulances arrived, bodies were being piled in them on top of one another. As I slowly moved through the piles of bodies, by now separated from my friends, I saw a Saudi officer. Pretending total innocence, I asked him in Arabic: 'What happened?'

The officer's reply was both revealing and typical of the Saudis. 'They are all corrupters. They want to disrupt the Hajj so we have taught them a lesson'.

I wanted to get more out of him so I continued, pretending that I was on his side; 'There are so many dead. How many are ours?' 'Nobody is killed from our side; only a few are injured,' the Saudi boasted, as he moved towards his troops.

I am not sure how long I stayed there surveying the scene. My next recollection is of Saudi soldiers and police ordering people to clear the streets and go home. I decided to go to the Haram instead. I went there and prayed and cried. I don't remember what I said in my prayers or for how long. But one question kept coming back to me again and again: 'Why, Oh, why God, did they have to kill people and so many of them?' There was nobody to ask. The other pilgrims were busy in *tawwaf*, totally oblivious of the fact that more than five hundred fellow pilgrims had been slaughtered by the 'guardians' of the Haramain and their soldiers.

It was well past midnight when I left the Haram to return to my building. On the way I saw municipal crews busy cleaning and washing the streets.

For two days, I didn't feel like eating anything. When an Iranian brother noticed this he told me: 'Why are you sad? Those who were martyred are much better-off where they have gone. We are all prepared for *shahadah*. That is an honour for every true believer'.

It was at this point that I realized what *taqwa* really means and that the Iranians have truly made their covenant with Allah. They cannot be defeated because they are not struggling for worldly gains. Their struggle is for the pleasure of Allah.

(Rahif Khodary, originally from the northern city of Tripoli, Lebanon, now lives in Montreal, Canada).

Eyewitness No. 2

Dr Taqi Bangash

On that tragic Friday afternoon I walked towards the Masjid al-Haram with two friends. We noted unusual activity both in the air and also on the roads leading to the Masjid. A helicopter constantly

hovered overhead and its focal point of attention was the area where the demonstrating *hujjaj* were gradually increasing in number, some three kilometres away from the outer boundary of the Masjid. The number of police vehicles also gradually increased in the area. The helicopter came very low near the building in which Imam Khomeini's Hajj representative was staying. Later, another helicopter joined the first one. It clearly belonged to the Saudi army, while the first one appeared to be a police helicopter.

By 4:30 pm, the number of demonstrators had grown to more than 150,000. One could clearly distinguish non-Iranians of various nationalities: Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis, Afghans, Lebanese (mostly from the Hizbullah), Kuwaitis, Bahrainis, Iraqis, at least one black American, two Croatians, some Sudanese (including two cousins of the Sudanese prime minister), and representatives of the Moro Liberation Front of the Philippines.

There were some Saudis among them — undercover agents of the Saudi government. I clearly recognized one of the Saudi agents by his behaviour and dress and talked to him about the growing power of the Iranian revolution. He saw Iranian postal stamps bearing pictures of the Haramain Sharif in the hands of a demonstrator and became more serious, asking the demonstrator in his broken Persian to which country he belonged. The Bahrain Pakistani demonstrator replied that he, like several others standing there, was a Pakistani. Soon, the Pakistanis joined the sea of people in their slogan chanting. One of the Pathan demonstrators chanted a unique slogan: 'Fahd is the enemy of God,' of which the Iranians took serious notice, telling the Pathan that they did not want any trouble with the Saudi authorities, and thus there would be no slogans which might annoy the Saudis. Seemingly unconcerned, the intelligence agent looked across the demonstrators to the police force which stood without any arms and ammunition at a reasonable distance.

A more carefully organized demonstration I had never seen. I found it surprising that such a demonstration could take place under the burning sun of Makkah, with so many old women and men. The most striking demonstrators were the war-crippled youth in wheelchairs who would lead the procession.

Iran's Hajj representative, Hujjatul-Islam Karrubi, delivered his speech with a great deal of revolutionary fervour. He outlined the Iranian stand on global issues, including Afghanistan, Lebanon and Palestine

and warned the US that if she committed any mistakes in the Persian Gulf she would regret them.

One hundred and fifty thousand strong, the demonstrators covered an area of more than two kilometres. Their carefully orchestrated slogans were directed with fervour and emotion by Agha Murtazaifar through powerful loudspeakers which were evenly spread through the expanse of demonstrators.

There was no apparent reason to suspect that something unusual would happen. The demonstrators were happy they had been given a chance by Imam Khomeini to condemn imperialism from the very heart of Islam. They had performed *Umra* and there was no doubt in their minds that the demonstration would reach a successful conclusion. In previous years there had been friction with the Saudi police during the demonstrations, but nothing serious had happened. Thus, there was no anxiety on most of the faces that one could see.

Even the police force seemed at ease, without any weapons, watching the demonstrators but not disturbing or interfering with them. The two police rows had no weapons at all, not even batons, until the demonstration reached Masjid al-Jinn. There the police force was conspicious by its absence, leading a casual observer to think that all was well. After all, it was a peaceful demonstration chanting slogans against Israel, the US and the Soviet Union and in favour of Muslim unity, and thus there was no need of a police force at all. This assumption soon proved incorrect: heavily-armed security agencies — police, undercover Saudi agents and army contingents — had rallied around the front of the demonstration and they were determined to block the onward march of the peaceful but enormous procession, the size of which was enough to scare the powers-that-be.

Though the demonstrators were well-disciplined, they were chanting very loud slogans. To the left of the demonstration at this point lay a multi-storey car park. The Iranians were determined to proceed towards the mutually-agreed end point of the demonstration, which was about 500 metres ahead, but the Saudis were equally determined to stop them. The demonstrators were unarmed and the other side was not only armed but also determined to use force.

The Iranian clergy then addressed the procession, speaking on the major political problems of the Muslim world. Though the Saudis were not criticized directly, their friends, the Americans, were most

bitterly taken to task for their presence in the Persian Gulf. The Arabic translation of the speech was heard by many non-participant Saudis who were watching the demonstration from their air-conditioned multi-storey apartments. By the end of the speech the slogans for Muslim unity and against America, Israel and Russia had been carefully memorized in Arabic by this predominantly Iranian but multinational demonstration, and their well-coordinated chanting created a pleasant feeling of Muslim unity in this most sacred city of Islam.

It was evident that the official Iranian organizers had summoned all the skills acquired during the revolution, using loudspeakers and moving slogans against the enemy, Israel, and its supporter, the US. Makkah was overcome by this gathering. Two young Iranians climbed to the top of the Saudi telephone office and fixed photographs of Imam Khomeini there. And then one of them did something unprecedented in the streets of Makkah: he burnt an American flag. The emotions of the demonstrators rose to a climax. One hundred and fifty thousand is not a small congregation and burning the American flag was an act which the Iranians themselves had not done in recent years. Another Iranian climbed an electric pole and set fire to a second American flag.

Several Saudi officials were recording the demonstration with their video cameras from two different buildings. One was observing the demonstration through binoculars, others were taking pictures, obviously for intelligence purposes. An official was also vainly trying to disturb the Iranian filming of the demonstration by reflecting the sun's rays onto the camera using bathroom-size mirors.

After the burning of the American flags, the huge dome of Bait al-Muqqadas emerged out of the crowd and the demonstrators started moving on the agreed route, led by women and war-crippled youth in their wheelchairs. When the procession was still 500 metres short of the agreed end point, undercover agents started pelting stones on it from the multi-storeyed car park to its left. The riot police, National Guardsmen, army and white-robed security agents fully armed with batons, pistols and automatic rifles blocked the way of the demonstration. The demonstrators, mostly Iranians, began to argue with the security forces. Their anti-American zeal became more pronounced.

And then the firing began. It continued for a full hour and 15 minutes.

Thousands of bullets were fired, both in the air and also at the unarmed demonstrators. Evidence of the firing is available on videotape, photoghraphs and X-ray photographs which give a complete picture of the tragic events of that black Friday.

I was watching the wounded men and women. Suddenly, my eyes rose to the parapet of the highway bridge over Hujun Street. I saw a Saudi balancing a log, about to throw it on the demonstrators with the full force of his body. It would break somebody's neck, I thought. I started shouting in my broken Persian: 'Take care! Avoid that log'. Some demonstrators turned and looked towards me. Both my hands were pointing towards the Saudi. I do not know whether that log injured someone or not, but I did invite a bullet from the bridge. It passed barely an inch away from my forehead. I heard its sound as it pierced the air near my head. Towards my left, another bullet hit the ground. For a moment the blood froze in my veins. So close to death, for no crime.

Meanwhile, the number of wounded being carried to the rear of the demonstration increased. Two of them had received bullet wounds but were still alive. A young Iranian had a wound in his hip and was limping. I offered him assistance. He looked towards me, and recognizing me as a non-Iranian, declined my offer, telling me that he could still walk. I knew he would fall because of loss of blood, and insisted. He agreed to put his arm around my neck, staining my white shirt with his blood. We moved slowly for some yards, hoping to reach a place where he could get first aid. I looked at his face. He was young, strikingly handsome and smartly dressed. Towards my left, I saw another Iranian being carried by men and women. He had received a bullet wound in his stomach and was in critical condition but there was no first aid available. Where were they carrying him ? There was no place to flee, for the demonstration was encircled.

A volley of bullets was coming from the south. Stones, wooden sticks and pressurized boiling water through a large pipe were being showered from the same side. To the right of the fleeing people there was a wall, to the left were buildings and from the opposite side came a gas shell. There was no place to flee. Saudi police had encircled the gathering and there was no retreat. What the demonstrators thought was the safe side of the area was full of a strange gas. A tear gas shell produces tears, but this gas caused excessive burning of the skin and suffocation. Thus, some demonstrators thought it better to turn back

once again, preferring the side from which the volley of bullets had caused them to retreat. More than one hundred and fifty thousand people —men, women and the wounded — were pressed hard against each other. The gas suffocation was unbearable, and the condition of some old ladies was pitiful. Anyone who fell was stampeded. Some rushed to a shop and opened the freezer which was full of water and soft drinks and frantically began to splash water over their faces to soothe their burning skin.

Once the gas dispersed, and with it the bullets, I began to survey the area. The wide al-Haram Street presented a terrible sight. There were more than 50,000 *burqas* and *chadors* left by fleeing women. Bulldozers were brought to clear the road. The number of shoes, water flasks and banners with the verses of the Holy Qur'an, pictures and placards on the road was so great that it was impossible for the Iranian or Saudi ambulances to pass. I counted thirty-four dead bodies, all women, at one spot. I lifted some of them into an ambulance with the help of an Iranian doctor.

In the middle of the road sat a large number of demonstrators. They did not know what to do next. A young Iranian said, 'Let's go to the office of the Imam's representative.' Others said, 'No, sit down'. The young man repeated his suggestion, to which an old man who wanted to continue the demonstration and not wishing to leave the scene, retorted, '*Boro Amreeka*!' (Go to America!). The biggest insult for an Iranian revolutionary is to be told to go to America. That group of Iranians continued to sit solid as a rock on the road.

It was getting dark. I started walking towards the Masjid al-Haram, watching the bulldozers clearing the road. I searched for the empty shell of the bullet that had been fired at me, but it was rapidly becoming dark and the Saudis were cleaning and clearing the road. Blood was being washed away with water. In spite of the darkness I succeeded in finding an empty shell and put it in my pocket. I saw the beautiful dome of Bait al-Muqqadas once again, but it was broken and had lost its beauty. Some crushed wheelchairs belonging to the crippled youth were being lifted by the bulldozers.

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Eyewitness No. 3

Haji Asadullah

There were three of us from India. At around two in the afternoon, we stepped out of the Masjid al-Haram, the House of Allah in Makkah, after the Friday prayers on July 31, 1987. We used to visit the Sacred Mosque daily for all our prayers. But on that Friday afternoon we realized that something was amiss. We saw army trucks and military men swarming the streets leading to Masjid al-Jinn, almost a kilometre away from the Sacred Mosque. We were curious to know why but did not who to ask. We were also hungry so we walked into a Pakistani restaurant. The waiter was very prompt in serving us lunch. He was also forthcoming in answering our question. He told us that 'the Iranians were going to riot and indulge in looting and the army was there to control them'. He was very tense so we did not question him further but it did cause anxiety among us. We were, therefore, curious to see for ourselves what the Iranians were upto. Of course, we were sure that nobody would riot or loot while on a pilgrimage.

The Saudi National Guards were everywhere but more concentrated at the cross-roads near Masjid al-Jinn. Some of them also had helmets, shields and batons, but otherwise all of them had guns. Behind the guards at Masjid al-Jinn I saw two armoured cars. There were also a large number of army trucks and the special buses used by Saudi National Guards. These were all full of military personnel. Behind them, at a distance of every few metres were police patrol cars and motor bikes, as if all planned and positioned. But why?

We stopped at one of the corners of Masjid al-Jinn. The cross-road was packed with rows of security personnel. The traffic on the roads to my front, right and behind was totally blocked. But there was no traffic on the road to my left leading to the place where the Iranians had gathered, about one kilometre away from the cross-roads. The Iranians could be seen coming towards the main square in groups of fifty to a hundred from different directions. They had already fixed speakers all along the road and we could clearly hear the speech of their leader, delivered in Persian. What little I could understand was that he was saying something about Israel, America and Jerusalem and about the unity of Muslims. At this time we decided to get closer to the gathering in Al-Mo'abdah Square to get a better view of the

scene.

It must have been around 5:30 pm. Their leader had delivered his speech by the time we reached half-way, near a bridge. Now we saw them moving towards us (towards Masjid al-Jinn) in the form of a procession. We thought of going onto the bridge to get a better view, especially as it passed below the bridge, but then we realized that the crowd was so massive that we could not have passed through it. We thus returned to the cross-roads. There were more than a hundred other onlookers in our corner of the square.

All roads were blocked with traffic, mostly cars, while the large square of the cross-roads was packed with military personnel. By this time the procession had passed under the bridge and was heading towards us. The thick band of black *chador*-clad women was on the left and men on the right of the road. What moved me was their slogans in a chorus as if reaching the heavens. It appeared as if they were pleading to Allah, all in one voice. The slogans were in praise of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, curse on America, Israel and Russia and finally the call for Muslim unity. Their slogans echoed in the sky as if they were inviting every Muslim to hear their call and join them against Israel, America and Russia. Their solid unity, in one voice and their faces and hands lifted towards the heavens confirmed their pleading to Allah. They moved my heart; they were indeed wise in selecting the Holy City and the time of Hajj to plead their grievances to Allah.

Yet I was confused. Why this large army for such a peaceful procession? Why the rumours that they were going to riot? And loot what with the few shops on the roads closed anyway?

It was at about 6:00 pm that I witnessed the beginning of the tragedy, the saddest moment in the history of Islam in the recent past. Empty pepsi cans and slippers were thrown at the Iranian pilgrims from the top of the buildings. To add to our utter confusion we also heard a few of them calling the Iranians '*mushrik*' (infidels) while throwing slippers and spitting upon them. Then we saw mud being thrown from the roof-tops and windows. The Iranians bore all this without the least retaliation. As the procession reached the square, stones were pelted from the buildings. This caused some panic, especially among the women.

I cannot recollect how the other onlookers standing beside us

disappeared from the scene. The three of us found ourselves among the hundreds of women screaming and trying to run towards safety. We held on to each other's hands tightly but we were separated by the wave of women that rushed past. It is difficult to recollect all the details of those few moments. It was at this stage that I heard the loud screaming of the women. It scared me terribly and I tried to run. The women also were trying to run. I was cornered against the wall of a building while the screaming women were falling upon me. I had to turn to see what was happening.

The National Guards were mercilessly beating the men and women with clubs. They were falling down with head injuries. At this time a few pistol shots were also fired by the security personnel. I saw the women falling one by one on the ground. The guards did not hesitate to stamp over the bodies of the fallen women while chasing the others. The next thing I saw a few Iranian men on the other side of the road trying to stop the National Guards from beating the women. Within minutes, I saw the guards retreating on their own. In fact, they were running on their heels as if death was chasing them. Even though I was in a very perturbed and confused state of mind, I wondered as to why the guards were taking to their heels when they had the upper hand. Everything became clear a few minutes later with the crackling sound of machine-gun fire and I saw women and men falling. At this time, to get out of the line of fire, the frightened Iranians broke two or three shops and took refuge there.

A wave of screaming women pushed me up to a corner of the square. Some Iranian men pushed these women into a lane on the right and I was also swept away in the current. Another strong and screaming wave of women pushed me inside the lane. While moving into this lane, I heard the second round of firing by machine guns. I turned to see while I was running. Again I saw the horrible scene of women falling to the ground. I took position beside a closed door of the building from where I could see a part of the main road. Suddenly a bullet hit the wall only a metre away from me and I ran through that lane finding many Iranian men and women running in the same direction. When I slowed down after turning a few unknown streets of Makkah, I had to witness yet another horrible scene. Those Iranians who were lost and were found alone or in twos were being beaten up in the narrow streets by the Saudi personnel.

It was quite dark and I was walking through these strange streets all

alone. My heart was beating in fear after witnessing that inhumane massacre. I was also anxious and worried for my two friends. It was a bad time to be looking for a way out to reach our building, but I arrived there at around 10 pm. To my great relief, my friends had already reached there although one had been hit in the back and the other on the head. We thanked Allah for His protection from the horror and for the safety He had granted us.

But why did the Saudis fire guns? I do not know. Did the Iranians raise any slogans against the Saudis? Certainly not! Did the Iranians riot or loot or attack the Saudis? I stand witness that they did not, at least not until the firing had begun, until which time I was there myself — maybe later, I do not know. But why did all this happen? I do not know. Was it a Shi'i-Sunni rift? Of course not, because there were thousands of other Shi'is too — from India, Pakistan and other countries and they were not harmed. This is an old story repeated every time: chief orders and soldiers fire. They do not know why they are asked to fire. Of course, when they are asked to stop they stop. Who will order next, where and when, only Allah knows.

(*Haji Asadullah is from Hyderabad, India*).

Eyewitness No. 4

Ebrahim Patel

At 2:30 pm, after Juma' prayers, I left my hotel with six other South Africans to go to the Sheesha district, about three kilometres from the Masjid al-Haram. When we got there we saw people handing out pamphlets in English and Turkish. Everytime we tried to read the pamphlets, a Saudi man would take them away from us. Meanwhile, the Iranian pilgrims sat in huge human squares in the space in front of us. The Iranians distributed cold water to bystanders. We were told that speeches were going to be made at some distance from where we were standing.

We walked further and listened to the speeches. The various spokesmen appealed to Muslims all over the world to unite. Iranian speakers spoke in Persian and Arabic, and appealed to the people of Makkah to

take up the cause of Islam once again. Obviously we did not understand any of the speeches, but they were translated for us. We read *Asr* prayers in Masjid al-Jinn, after which it was decided that the pilgrims gathered there would begin proceeding south. We walked about 40 abreast, and about 100 banners in different languages were carried. Some of them read: Death to Israel, Death to America, Death to the Soviet Union. Other banners had on them the *Kalima — La ilaha illal-lah* (There is no God save Allah).

Not a single banner which I could see criticized the Saudis. The procession started to move chanting slogans and the *kalima*. I could not understand some of the slogans in *Farsi* (Persian).

We had hardly moved for about ten minutes when we reached a multi-storey carpark. Suddenly big stones (not bricks), buckets, pieces of iron, rubble and all sorts of missiles rained upon our heads. Pandemonium, confusion, shouts and screams could be heard from all quarters. I ran to save myself. All I can remember as I tried to get away was that the man next to me was hit on his head. His blood stained my *kurta* (shirt). I was on the left of the procession, and got to a nearby drinks stall on which I managed to get on top. I tried to reach a bridge passing over the stall and as I tried to reach out, someone offered me a hand and lifted me up. On top of the bridge I could only hear screams of crying men and women. Then I heard single shots and stray bullets. I fled into a nearby dead alley. People were knocking on the doors, but no one opened them. I did not know what to do. Spotting two cars I thought that if worst came to worst I would take cover under one of them. Then I spotted a door opening slightly and noticed a Javanese man peeping out in expectation of someone. I pushed open this door with the assistance of others. We did not ask permission to go in, we just moved in. In all, three of us slipped in — a middle-aged Iranian man, an Algerian and myself. When we got inside we saw an Iranian woman squatting in the courtyard.

On the right hand side of the courtyard was a little room. The Javanese, it seems, was a tailor because I saw unfinished shirts (*thawbs*) hanging all over the place. I was in a complete daze, and do not know how long I took to recover from the shock. I kept on asking myself: 'Why, why, why?' Then I started to register the shooting outside and all I could hear was shrieks and shouts which were too much for the ears to bear. I could not see anything but could only hear. I heard the rattle of sub-machine guns, and can say without fear of contradiction

that the shooting took place for about an hour and fifteen minutes.

I counted my blessings. I asked myself why was I saved? I have never been so close to death. The Algerian attempted to go out during the shooting because he apparently had a member of his family outside. All I could understand him saying was, 'I am an Algerian' . I think he thought he was safe because he was not an Iranian. The Iranian man continuously urged him not to go out and took out a small pocket book. He showed the Algerian the picture of two young men and communicated to him that these were his two sons that were killed in the war. Then he showed him a picture of a baby around nine to twelve months old which I understood was also killed.

It was now past *maghrib* and everything was silent. There was no more shooting, but I heard ambulances and sirens. I thought it was safe to go out but, then something else happened. I heard banging on doors and people crying. Then I realized that there was a house-to-house search. At the time I did not know the search was for Iranians. We ran into a storeroom. Then I realized that it may not be safe with them and moved out of the room. The door opened and an Arab man came in shouting, 'Irani, Irani, Hukuma Irani...'. Police came in. I covered the blood-stain on my shirt with my hand and in the rush all I could say was, 'I am South African. I am not Iranian'. As I moved out and tried to get away all I could see was that those two other men and the woman were being dragged out and beaten into pulp. Wherever there was an Iranian they beat him with whatever was in their hands. Civilians, police and army formed groups of 20 to 30 people and joined the beating of one person, with no mercy shown. You could not say these were Muslims. As I made my way to my hotel, I covered the blood-stain on my shirt and people just stared at me.

(*Ebrahim Patel is a businessman from Cape Town, South Africa. He gave this account at Masjid us-Salaam in Athlone, Cape Town, on August 16, 1987.* — Courtesy *Afkar Inquiry*).

Eyewitness No. 5

Nazir Nasser

This was my third Hajj in as many years. I had attended all the previous unity marches in Medina and the *Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen*

marches in Makkah. In fact, the most recent unity march in Medina (during the 1987 Hajj) was most impressive. It was well-organized and attended by a very large number of non-Iranians, including many Saudis. Since all previous marches that I had attended went peacefully, of course barring some minor incidents, neither I nor any of my friends was expecting anything unusual this time either.

I joined the gathering at al-Mo'abdah Square on Friday, July 31 to listen to the speeches and resolutions. The crowd was massive but well-disciplined. After the speeches, we started moving south along al-Haram Street. I was very close to the front, only three or four rows from the head of the procession. It moved slowly amid chants of *Allahu Akbar* and slogans against the US, Russia and Israel. About a quarter of a mile from the point where the march was expected to end, we were confronted by a large contingent of Saudi troops. They had blocked the path of the procession by lining themselves, several deep, across the street. Some of the soldiers in the second row had guns. Almost all others had various kinds of guns, helmets and plastic shields.

Those in the front row of the procession tried to reason with the Saudi soldiers to let them pass. The Saudis refused to budge and instead ordered the marchers to go back and disperse. It was not only hot in the street but tempers also started to rise as both sides entered into a heated argument. Then all of a sudden, rocks started to be thrown at the procession. They came from both the 'civilian' crowd behind the soldiers as well as from the nearby parking lot and the Hujun bridge. I, too, was struck by a rock in the face. My glasses were smashed. My nose and face started to bleed profusely. Another rock hit me on the arm. During the rock throwing a lot of shoving and pushing occurred because people were trying to dodge the barrage of stones, glass bottles and other objects. Many people were also screaming. Some were crying.

As the rock throwing subsided a little, the Saudi soldiers rushed into the crowd beating people up with batons. Even old men, women and the crippled in wheelchairs were not spared. Despite my own state, I was particularly appalled to see Saudi soldiers attack totally helpless crippled people in wheelchairs and smash their heads. The victims, some of them without the use of arms, could not even shield their heads or faces. Women and old men were similarly pushed and beaten. Some men were beaten with iron bars even when they fell to the

ground. It was a ghastly sight and I could not understand the ferocity with which the Saudi soldiers were attacking people.

I was swept with the crowd as it retreated in the face of this rock assault as well as the baton-swinging Saudi soldiers. I do not remember in which direction I was pushed but after a long period that seemed to last forever, I found myself with a large group of Iranians in front of a hotel. The hotel refused to let any of us in despite the fact that many people, including myself, were bleeding from the head, face or arms. By this time my clothes were soaked in blood. We were surrounded by Saudi soldiers who ordered us to sit down.

After a while I thought I would get up and leave. As I stood up, a Saudi soldier struck me in the stomach. I fell back to the ground. Anyone who tried to stand up was immediately clubbed to the ground by the Saudis.

I sat in this position for a long time. Then I shuffled my way towards the soldiers and started talking to them. I told them that I was a Pakistani and was now living in Canada. I asked if I could leave. After some discussion between them, I was allowed to leave but the Iranians were ordered to stay on the ground.

I went back along the route of the march towards my hotel. On the way I counted at least 80 bodies still lying in the street. I also saw small groups of Iranians surrounded by Saudi soldiers who were beating them up.

When I reached my hotel, my friends were worried to see me in that state. They feared that I might die from excessive bleeding. *Alhamdulillah*, my injuries were not very serious though there was a lot of bleeding.

(*Nazir Nasser is a businessman currently living in Edmonton, Alberta*).

Index

A

Abd al-Malik bin Marwan, 72
Abdul Aziz ibn Rasheed, 41
Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, 29, 37, 40, 41, 43-49, 80, 81
Abdul Hamid II, Sultan, 42
Abdullah, 44
Abdullah ibn Abdul Aziz, 37
Abdullah ibn Jaluwi, 48, 72
Abdullah ibn Zubayr, 71, 72
Abdullah ibn Zubayr Street, 4
Abdul Muttalib, 9
Abdul Qadir, Amir, 62, 63
Abdul Rahman, 40
Abdul Wahhab Abdul Was'a, 15
Abdul Wahhab, Muhammad ibn, 39
Abu Bakr, 59, 60, 71, 72
Abu Bakr, Imam Yasin, 80
Abu Lahab, 78
Abu Sufyan, 78
Abu Tahir Sulaiman, 72
Abu Talib Cemetery, 9
Afghanistan, 5, 30, 83, 90
Afkar Inquiry, 31, 100
ahadith, 58
Ahmad ibn Idris, 63
Ahmad, Sayyid, 30, 61, 62
Ajlan, Shaikh, 40
Ajman, the, 44, 48
akhirah, 83
Al-Abtah Street, 2
Al-Artawiya, 44, 47
Alawneh, Shaikh Ibrahim, 80
Alberta, 102
Al-Dilam, 40
Al-Fadihah, 60
Algeria, 51, 62
Al-Gudaria Street, 1
Al-Haram Street, 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9, 87, 88, 94, 101
Ali, Imam, 60
Ali, Muhammad, 40 *alim* (pl. *ulama*), 28
Al-Jami li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, 58
Allah, v, vi, 5, 9, 13-15, 25, 30, 35, 44, 52, 57-61, 64-69, 74, 77-80, 83-85, 96, 98, 99
Allahu Akbar, 6, 101
Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, 59
Al-Mo'abdah Square, 2-4, 18, 87, 95, 101
Al-Raquba Street, 1, 2
Al-Rashaad, 25
Al-Rekkah, 37
Al-Tafsir al-Kabir, 59
America, *see* USA
Amin, Dr Yusuf, 80
Amirghaniya, the, 63
Anas bin Malik, 59
Anglo-French treaty, 44
Anglo-Saudi friendship treaty, 43
Ayoub Ansari, 72
Arab News, 13
Arab Revolt, 43, 45
Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), 49
Arabian Peninsula, 37, 39, 42-45, 48, 72, 81, 83
Arafat, 3, 14, 17, 61, 65
Asadullah, Haji, 98
Asi, Imam Muhammad al-, 79, 80
Asir, 63
Athlone, 100
AWACS, 52
Awang, Ustad Hadi, 80
Awqaf, 15, 19
Azaiyiz, 48
'Azamgargh, 25
Azhari, Maulana M Hasan al-, 80
Aziziyyah district, 3, 17, 18

B

Ba'ath Party, the, 51
Bahrain, 48, 53, 72, 90
Bait Allah, *see* Masjid al-Haram
Bait al-Muqqadas, 92, 94
Balakot, 61
Balfour Declaration, 43, 51
Bangash, Dr Taqi, 80, 94
Bangladesh, 4, 90
Banna, Hasan al-, 30
Bara'at min al-Mushrikeen march, 2, 15, 16, 21, 25, 74, 82, 83, 100
barakah, 85
Baseejis, 25, 26
Basmallah, 60
batil, 58, 60
ba'ya, 15
Bazargan, Mahdi, 31

Becca, 66
Beirut, 53
Bengal, 62
Benghazi, 36
bid'ah, 72, 84
Bosnia, 43
Bridgeton, 37
Britain, 37, 41, 44, 48, 49, 51, 68, 79
British colonialism, 37, 41-48, 61, 62
Bulgaria, 43
burqas, 94
Burton, Richard F, 41

C

Caesar, 57
Cairo Conference, the, 45
Canada, 17, 89, 102
Cape Town, 100
Caucasus, 62, 63
chador, 4, 10, 88, 94, 96
Chicago, 48, 50
China, 68
Christianity, 57
CIA, 53
colonialism, 24, 57, 61, 63, 64, 84
Committee for Union and Progress, 42
Constantinople, 40, 42
Contras, 53
court *ulama*, 28, 58, 73, 83
Cox, Percy, 43, 44
Crane, Charles R, 48, 49
Crete, 43
Croats, 90
Cyprus, 46
Czar, 62, 63

D

Dadhu Miyan, 62
Damascus, 44, 71
Dar al-Harb, 62
Dar al-Islam, 62, 81
Dar'iyyah, 39, 40, 72
Dar-ul Ifta, 24
Darul-Uloom Nadwat-ulama, 25
Da'wah, 29
Delhi, *see* New Delhi
Dhaidhan ibn Hithlain, 48
din, 59, 68
di-Tiro, Dr Hasan, 80

E

Edmonton, 102
Egypt, 4, 13, 40, 43, 50, 51, 54, 63, 67, 68, 72, 79
England, 41, 79
Equitorial Africa, 63
Esso, 50
Europe, 43
European colonialism, 61, 81
Evin prison, 27
Exxon, 50

F

Fadhlallah, Shaikh Muhammad Husain, 53, 79
Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz, 13, 17, 20, 29, 37, 53, 67, 69, 74, 90
Fahd ibn Abdullah, 48
Faisal al-Daweesh, 47, 48
Fara'idi movement, 62
Fatimah, 72
Fatimids, 72
fatwa, 62, 73
Faw Peninsula, 52
Feisal, 44
fiqh, 58
First World War, 43, 80
France, 42, 44, 51, 68, 73

G

Germany, 43
Ghazi Muhammad, 62
Ghot Ghot, 44, 47
God, *see* Allah
Granada, 63
Greece, 43

H

Hadi, Dr Muhammad Ali, 15
hadith, 83
Hail, 40
Hajj, v, vi, 3-5, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23, 25-27, 30, 35, 40, 45, 57-74, 77, 79, 80, 83-85, 88, 96, 100
Hajj Organization Cell, 17
Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, 72
Hajjat-ul Wida *khutbah*, 61
Hajr-e Aswad, 15, 71
Hallack, Shaikh Abdullah, 80
Hamoud, Shaikh Maher, 79, 80
Hamza, 60
Hanbal, Imam, 30, 39
haqq, 58
Haram (*see* also Masjid al-Haram), v, 1, 3, 11, 13, 20, 25, 71, 89
  sanctity of, v, 13, 14, 28, 35, 46, 65-74, 79, 83
  security in the, v, 65-71, 79, 83
  uprising in the, 28, 65, 70, 73
Haram-e Makkah ka Sanihah, 28

Haramain, v, vi, 37, 40, 41, 46, 50, 53, 58, 64, 67, 69, 74, 78-83, 89, 90
desecration of the, 40, 45, 46, 67, 70-74, 81, 82
Future of the, 77-85
Haron, Hume, 37
Hasa, 49
Hasan, King, 13
Hashemi, Mehdi, 27
Herzegovina, 43
Hijaz, the, 14, 40-43, 45, 46, 47, 72, 81, 82
British intrigues in, vi, 41-48, 81
Hijaz, 42
hijra, 66
Hizbullah, 4, 90
holy places of Islam, *see* Haramain
Hong Kong Muslim Herald, The, 31
House of Allah, *see* Masjid al-Haram
House of Saud, vi, 13-15, 24, 28, 30, 35, 51, 53, 61, 65, 67-70, 72, 74, 77-80, 84, 85
corruption of the, 29, 47, 53, 58, 67, 73
subservience to the US of, 35-37, 50, 53, 54, 64, 68, 69, 78, 84
Houston, 50
hujjaj, v, 1-5, 9-11, 13-17, 19, 23, 25, 26, 29, 46, 58, 61, 69, 74, 77, 78, 81-83, 90
safety of, 35, 46, 70, 71
Hujun Bridge, 6, 9, 93, 101
Husain, Imam, 30, 61, 71
Husain, King, 13
Husain, Saddam, 13, 16, 51, 78
Hussain ibn Ali, Sharif, 42-46, 48, 81
Hussain, Mushahid, 23
Hyderabad, 98

I

Ibn Abbas, 58
Ibn Bijad, Sultan, 47
Ibn Kathir, Isma'il 'Imad al-Din Abu al-Fida, 59
Ibn Masood, 58
Ibn Rasheed, 40, 41, 43
Ibn Saud, 40, 43
Ibn Saud, Muhammad, 39
Ibn Taimiyyah, Imam, 39, 59
Ibn Zayd, 59
Ibrahim, upon whom be peace, Prophet, 30, 57, 58
Ickes, Harold L, 49
Idrisi order, the, 63
ihram, 46, 58
Ikhwan, the, 44, 46-48, 73
'ilm, 59
imams, 14, 15, 46
imperialism, 24, 31, 91
India, 4, 5, 20, 25, 28, 29, 41, 61, 62, 68, 90, 95, 98
Indonesia, 19, 31, 68
Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, 61, 62
International Hajj Conference (London), 29
Iraq, 13, 36, 44, 47, 51, 52, 68, 72, 90
Iraqi Ba'athists, 26, 51, 52
Iran, vi, 13, 20-22, 26, 31, 36, 48, 52, 74
Islamic Republic of, 5, 25-27, 51, 79, 81
Islamic Revolution in, 4, 24, 28, 50, 51, 54, 64, 65, 82
Islamic State of, 28, 52, 82
Iran-Contra affair, 53
Islahi, Abul Laith, 28
Islam, v, 5, 13, 24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 37, 39, 40, 42, 48, 51-53, 57, 60, 61, 63-65, 68-70, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 91, 92, 96, 98
Islamabad, 23
Islamic Fiqh Council, 29
Islamic movement, 24, 68, 82-84
Islamic State, the, 80, 83
Israel, 4, 5, 13, 15, 35, 48, 50, 51, 53, 68, 78, 81, 82, 87, 91, 92, 95, 96, 99, 101
Istanbul, 42
Italy, 43

J

Jabal ar-Rahmah, 65
Ja'fari Ithna Ashari, 59
jahili (system), vi, 28
Jama'at-e Islami (India), 28
Jama'at-e Islami (Pakistan), 24, 25
Jami'at-ur Rashaad, 25
Janata Party, 28
Jannat-ul Baqi', 72
Jansen, G H, 23
Jarrab, 43
Jasaarat, 24
Jazirat al-Arab, 80
Jeddah, 6, 14, 20, 21, 26, 28, 41, 46, 47
Jehangiri, Syed, 15, 16
Jerusalem, 21, 23, 51, 63, 81, 95
Jerusalem Post, The, 23
jidal, 58-60
jihad, 5, 61, 62, 64, 78, 83
Jordan, 5, 13, 19, 68, 73

K

Ka'aba, 15, 17, 19, 20, 31, 60, 64, 65, 67, 72, 73, 77, 84
kafirs, 28, 31, 68
kalima(h), 4, 5, 10, 15, 30, 99
Kani, Dr Ahmed Muhammad, 80
Karachi, 24, 25
Karbala, 71
Karrubi, Hujjatul-Islam Mahdi, 4, 5, 15, 77, 79, 90

Kayfa Yanzur al-Muslimoon Il-al Hijaz wa Jazirat al-Arab, 29
Kemal, Mustafa, 45
Kemalists, 31
Khadija, 9
'Khadim al-Haramain', 67
khalifah, 40, 42, 45, 71, 72
Khamenei, Seyyed Ali, 79
Kharg Island, 52
Khashoggi, Hisham, 15, 16
Khatami, Dr Muhammad, 79
Khayyat, Mansour, 3, 35, 36
khilafat, 45, 63, 71, 72, 80, 81
Khodary, Rahif, 89
Khomeini, Imam Ruhullah al-Musavi, 4, 15, 23, 28, 30, 31, 77, 78, 83, 90, 91, 94
Khulafa-e Rashideen, 57, 61
khulafah, 30
khutbah, 65
King, Henry, 48
Koru, Fehmi, 31
Kufa, 61, 72
kuffar, 65, 84
kufr, vi, 16, 52, 61, 63, 64, 68, 69
Kurdistan, 52
Kuwait, 36, 40, 41, 43, 47, 52, 68

L

Lawrence, T E, 42
Lebanon, 4, 5, 13, 36, 79, 83, 89, 90
Lend-Lease agreement, 49
Libya, 36, 43, 63
London, 13, 29, 31, 64, 79
Louisiana, 52
Lucknow, 25, 28

M

Macedonia, 43
Madani, Asad, 28
Mafatih al-Ghayb, 59
Mahdi Sudani, 30
Mahmud ul-Hasan, Maulana, 62
Majid bin Abdul Aziz, 17
Majlis, 15, 25, 79
Majlis Tahaffuz-e Islam, 28
Makkah, v, vi, 1-3, 6-9, 11, 16-19, 21-23, 25, 27, 29-31, 36, 39-47, 53, 58, 60, 61, 65, 67, 68, 70-74, 77-79, 81, 90, 92, 95, 97, 98, 100
Malaysia, 4, 13
Maliki, 58
Malta, 62
manasik, v, 58
Mansur, al-, 72
Marcos, Ferdinand, 54
Marwa, 65
Mary, 68
Masjid al-Aqsa, 21, 70
Masjid al-Haram (*see* also Haram), 1, 4, 15, 18, 25, 46, 58, 64, 67, 69-74, 89, 94, 95, 98
Masjid al-Jinn, 3, 6, 9-11, 36, 91, 95, 96, 98
Masjid Al-Ni'mra, 65
Masjid us-Salaam, 100
Maududi, Sayyid Abul 'Ala, 30
Mecca, *see* Makkah
Medina, v, vi, 6, 16, 31, 39-41, 44, 46, 47, 60, 61, 67, 70-73, 78, 79, 81, 100
Mekkede Ne Oldu, 31
Messiah, 68
Middle East, 23, 42, 44, 48
Mina, 3, 14, 15, 17
Mismak fortress, 40, 72
Montreal, 89
Morocco, 13, 31, 63, 68, 73
Moro Liberation Front, 4, 90
Moscow, 48, 64
Mubarak, Hosni, 13
muffassirun, 58, 60
Mufti, Fawad, 5, 28
Muhammad, upon whom be peace, the Prophet, 9, 30, 57, 59-61, 63, 65, 69, 72, 80, 96
  sunnah of, vi, 61, 64, 73, 80, 84, 85
mujahid, 30
mujahideen, 4, 27
Mujahideen-e Khalq Organization, 31
Mulla Muhammad, 62
munafiqeen, 31
Murtazaifar, Agha, 4, 5, 91
Musa, Imam Abdul Alim, 80
Musavi, Mir Husain, 79
mushrikeen, v, vi, 2, 5, 15, 60, 64, 65, 67, 69, 73, 77, 79, 82, 83
Muslim, The, 23
Muslim Digest, The, 31
Muslim ibn 'Uqbah, 71
Muslim Institute, The, 29, 79
Mutair, the, 44, 47, 48
muttaqi ulama, 83

Mc

McFarlane, Robert, 52
McMahon, Henry, 43

N

Nadvat ul-Ulama, 28
Nadvi, Abul Hasan Ali, 28, 29
Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 51
Nasser, Nazir, 102
Nateq Nouri, Ali Akbar, 27
National Guards, 3, 8, 17, 92, 95, 97
nationalism, 31, 51, 59, 81, 84
Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, 17, 28, 37

Nejd, 39, 41, 43, 46–49
neo-colonialism, 57
New Delhi, 28, 64
New York, 50
Nigeria, 4
Nimrod, 58
North Africa, 43, 63
North West Frontier Province, 62
Nubia, 63
Nursi, Badi-az-Zaman, 30

O

Okaz, 15, 27
Oklahoma, 52
Oregon, 67
Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), 50
Otayba, the, 44, 47, 48
Otayba, Juhaiman al-, 73, 74
Ottawa, 13

P

Pakistan, 4, 9, 13, 20, 24, 25, 31, 62, 68, 90, 94, 98
Palestine, 5, 9, 13, 19, 30, 43, 48, 63, 83, 90
Palestine Liberation Organization, 65
Pasha, Ibrahim, 40
Persia, 72
Persian Gulf, the, 5, 6, 39, 43, 49, 52, 92
US war-mongering in, 5, 6, 22, 23, 36, 37, 53, 81, 91, 92
Peshawar, 94
Peshawar University, 94
Patel, Ebrahim, 100
Philby, Harry St John, 48, 49
Philby, Kim, 48
Philippines, the, 4, 54, 90
Picot, George, 44
Portland, 67
Portland State University, 67
Prophet, *see* Muhammad, upon whom be peace

Q

Qaramitas (Qarmatians), 15, 72, 73
Qarmat, Hamdan, 72
Qaswa, 72
Qatada, 59
Qum, 15
Quraish, 59, 69
Qur'an, vi, 4, 13, 15, 30, 35, 39, 46, 57-71, 80, 84, 94
Qurtubi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abu 'Abdullah al-, 58, 59
Qutb, Sayyid, 30

R

Rabita al-'Alam al-Islami, 24, 29, 31, 65
Rae Bareli, 61
Rafsanjani, Hujjatul-Islam Hashemi, 52, 79
Rajavi, Masoud, 31
Rashidiya, the, 63
Rathbone, Monroe, 50
Rawdhat al-Muhanna, 41
Razi, Fakhr al-Din al-, 59, 60
Reagan, Ronald, 23, 52
Red Sea, 41
Rehmani, Masood ul-Zafar, 28
Revolutionary Guards, 25, 26
Riyadh, 3, 37, 39, 40, 44, 47, 72
Romania, 51
Russia, *see* Soviet Union

S

Sabah, Mubarak al-, 40, 41
Sabillah, 47
Sabrouti, Dr Abdulfattah Abdulmoneim, al-, 79
Sadat, Anwar, 51, 54
Sa'em, Shaikh Muhammad, 79
Safa, 65
Sa'i, 65
Sakuni, Husain ibn Numayr al-, 71, 72
Salaam Palace, 20
Salahuddin, 63
Salahuddin, Muhammad, 24, 25, 29-31
Sanusi, Muhammad ibn Ali, 30, 62, 63
Sanusiya, 63
sarraf, 3
Saud ibn Abdul Aziz, 53
Saudi Arabia, 1, 3, 4, 16, 21, 26, 28-31, 37, 40, 47, 52, 67, 82, 83
  corruption in, 29, 47, 53, 58
  regime in, 29, 64, 68, 78, 81, 82
  subservient to *kufr*, 30, 51, 52, 64, 81, 82
  and the US, vi, 48-54, 81
Saudi Arabia, 20
Saudi Press Agency, 18
Saudi propaganda, 13-31
Second World War, 37, 49
Security Council, UN, 36
Sepah, 25, 26
Sha'ban, Shaikh Sa'eed, 79
Shaer, Ali Al-, 20
Shafi'i, 59, 62
Shah Abdul Aziz, 62
Shahabuddin, Syed, 28
Shahada(h), 83, 89
Shah Isma'il, 61, 62
Shah, Reza, 31, 51, 54, 78
Shah Wali Ullah, 61, 62

Shakespear, Captain, 43
Shamwyl, Imam, 62, 63
Shari'ah, 46, 47
Shari'ati, Dr Ali, 30
Shari'at Ullah, 62
Shinnawi, Dr Fehmi, 80
shirk, 30, 31, 66, 68, 69
Siddiqui, Dr Kalim, 79
Sierra Leone, 4
South Africa, 9, 31, 35, 100
Soviet Union, 4, 5, 15, 35, 51, 68, 82, 87, 91, 92, 96, 99, 101
Standard Oil Company of California (Socal), 48, 49
Stark, 36
Stockholm, 13
Sudan, 4, 63, 79, 90
Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, 17, 37
sunnah, 61, 80
surah, 60
Surah Bara'at, 60
Surah al-Ma'ida, 66
Surah al-Tauba, 60
Sykes, Mark, 44
Syria, 40, 50, 51, 72

T

Tabataba'i, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn, al-, 59
tafsir, 58, 59
Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 59
taghut, 57
Tahir, Maulana Sulaiman, 80
Taif, 39, 40, 45
Takbeer, 24-27, 29
talbiya, 58
Tameer-e Hayat, 25
taqwa, 89
Tariqa Muhammadiya, 63
tawwaf, 20, 65, 73, 89
Tayyib, Shaikh Muhammad Mehdi al-, 79
Tehran, 4, 21, 79
Tel Aviv, 64
Texas, 52
Toronto, 11
Toronto Star, The, 23
Toure, Shaikh Ahmed, 80
Transjordan, 44, 45, 47
Tripoli, 36, 89
Tripolitania, 43
Tureta, Shaikh Abubakr, 80
Turkey, 4, 5, 19, 31, 42, 43, 45, 79

U

Uhud cemetery, 72
UK, *see* Britain
ulama, 25, 28, 61, 62, 77, 79, 82
'Umar ibn al-Khattab, 60, 71
Umayyads, 72
Ummah, v, vi, 8, 13, 15, 16, 37, 57, 61, 62, 64-66, 69, 70, 73, 74, 77, 80, 82-85
Umra, 91
Um Urdhumah, 48
United Arab Emirates, the, 47
Uqair, 44
USA, 4-6, 14, 15, 20, 35, 49, 52-54, 68, 78, 79, 81, 82, 87, 91, 92, 94-96, 99, 101
Uthmaniyyah rule, 40-43, 63, 80

W

Wadi Arafat, 65
Wadi Hanifah, 40
Washington, DC, 20, 64
Washington Post, The, 23
Wegener, Ulrich, 3, 37
Weinberger, Casper, 23
West Germany, 3
White House, 31, 52, 69
Wilson, Woodrow, 48
Woodward, Bob, 53
World Assembly of Muslim Youth, 24
World Commission for the Haramain, 83
World Council of Masajid, 29

Y

Yazid, 61, 71, 73, 78
Yediot Ahronot, 23
Yemen, 45
Young Turks, 42, 43

Z

zakat, 67, 80
Zaman, 31
Zein el-Abidin, Shaikh Ali, 79
Zia ul-Haque, 24, 31
zionists, 26
Zionist State, the, *see* Israel
Zohrab, 41, 42